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Sri Siddaramaiah
Hon'ble Chief Minister

NACO
National AIDS Control Organisation
India's Voice against AIDS
Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India
www.naco.gov.in

GOVERNMENT OF KARNATAKA

KSAPS
KARNATAKA STATE AIDS PREVENTION SOCIETY

International Youth Day-2024

Department of Health and Family Welfare
Karnataka State AIDS Prevention Society

Theme
Youth Digital Pathways for Sustainable Development

Launch of Intensified IEC Campaign for HIV Free Karnataka

Date : 12-08-2024, 11:00 am | Place : Arogya Soudha Auditorium, Ground Floor, Magadi Road, Bengaluru - 560 023

Hon'ble Health Minister Shri Dinesh Gundurao
addressing during HIV campaign

Sri D K Shivakumar
Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister

To develop the scientific temper, humanism and the spirit of inquiry and reform - is the Fundamental duty of every citizen of India, enshriend in our constitution ....

If any Myths and misconceptions on HIV/AIDS Call National toll free Helpline No. AIDS Helpline 1097

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https://kspc.karnataka.gov.in

KarSAPS

Your Health, Our Responsibility

CORRUPTION ALLEGATION

Tender to procure X-ray scanner under lens

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NUMERO UNO

Women hoopsters help USA top tally

SPORT » PAGE 15

KOLKATA DOCTOR'S MURDER

Protests rage across medical colleges

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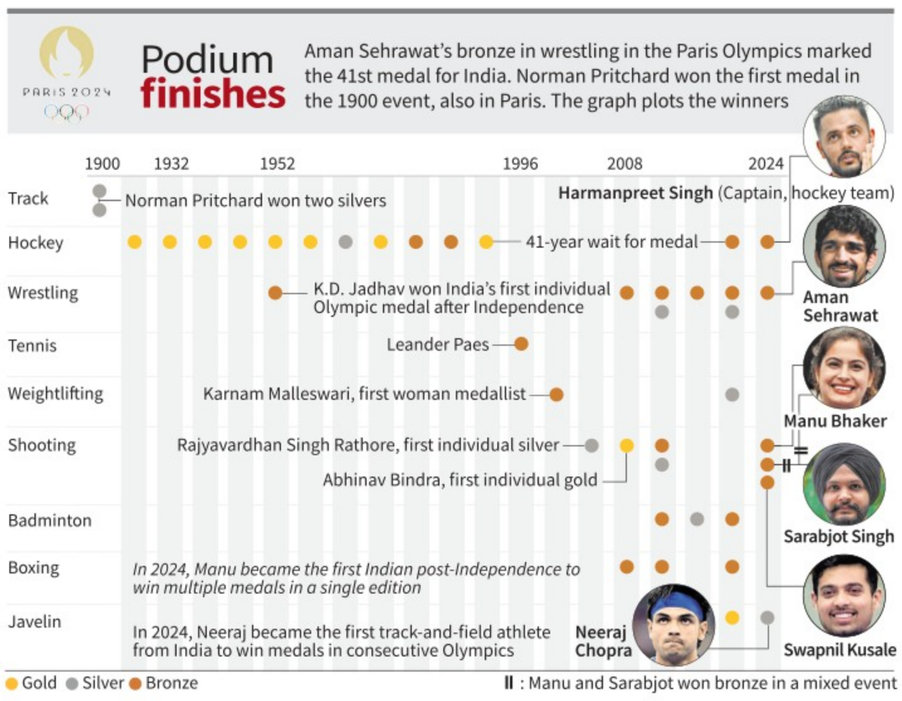

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Hindenburg report raises political storm

Congress seeks JPC probe into allegations by investment research firm against SEBI chief; BJP sees bid by global forces to halt India's progress

Devesh K. Pandey
NEW DELHI

Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, on Sunday demanded a Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) inquiry into the charges against Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) Chairperson Madhabi Puri Buch in the latest Hindenburg report.

The BJP dismissed the allegations, saying many global forces, with the help of the Congress "dynasty", were attempting to hinder India's progress.

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MORE REPORTS » PAGE 10

> The savings of millions of Indians are at risk. It is, therefore, imperative that this matter is investigated
>
> RAHUL GANDHI
> Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha

SEBI, Buch deny charges

Lalatendu Mishra
Ashokamithran T.
MUMBAI

Denying allegations in the latest Hindenburg report, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) on Sunday advised investors to remain calm and exercise due diligence before reacting to such reports.

SEBI Chairperson Madhabi Puri Buch and her spouse Dhaval Buch denied favouring the Adani Group, which said its overseas holding structure was "fully transparent" in a regulatory filing.

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 10

TB dam crest gate washed away, flood alert issued

The Hindu Bureau
KALABURAGI

Emergency action: The remaining 32 crest gates of the dam were opened to reduce the pressure on the broken gate. SRIDHAR KAVALI

A crest gate of the Tungabhadra reservoir, near Hospete, in Vijayanagara district of Karnataka was washed away late on Saturday, raising fears of flood downstream.

The reservoir authorities immediately issued an alert asking people not to venture into the river downstream as the outflow may increase up to 2 lakh cusecs at any time.

As the rain receded in the catchment area, resulting in diminished inflow into the reservoir, the dam authorities on Saturday reduced the discharge to around 28,000 cusecs to maintain the full reservoir level (FRL) of 1,633 feet with a total storage of 105.788 tmcft.

After the chain link of crest gate 19 was broken and the gate was washed away in the current around 10.50 p.m., the remaining 32 crest gates were opened to reduce the pressure on the broken gate. The discharge gradually increased and reached one lakh cusecs on Sunday morning.

Prohibitory orders were issued to prevent people from venturing into the reservoir and the river's banks.

Sources in the Irrigation Central Zone (Munirabad) of Karnataka Neeravari Nigam Ltd. (KNNL) said the discharge would have to be increased to 2 lakh cusecs for the next four days to bring down the water level in the reservoir and start repair works.

Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar rushed to the reservoir along with Minor Irrigation Minister N.S. Boseraju. Speaking to the presspersons, Mr. Shivakumar said that water storage in the reservoir needed to be reduced to about 60 tmcft to take up repairs.

"The reservoir was full with 105 tmcft of water when the incident happened at 10.50 p.m. on Saturday. The dam authorities immediately alerted all the Ministers, officers and departments concerned. Our expert team immediately rushed to the dam and assessed the situation. Experts from Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu have also arrived. At present, 98,000 cusecs of water is being released to the river by opening the remaining 32 gates. We need to bring down the water level to 60 tmcft to take up the repair s which may take at least four days," Mr. Shivakumar said.

Since Tungabhadra is an inter-State project involving Karnataka, Telangana and Andhra Pradesh, he said, the other two riparian States were informed about the incident.

Sources in the KNNL said the water level in the reservoir could be brought down to around 60 tmcft only when the slipway discharge is maintained at 2 lakh cusecs for the next four or five days. The authorities said there would be no threat of floods until the slipway discharge touches 2.5 lakh cusecs.

However, several monuments at the World Heritage Site of Hampi are likely to be flooded if the slipway discharge crosses 2 lakh cusecs.

Koppal MLA Raghavendra Hitnal, Assistant Commissioner Mahesh Kumar Malagatti, Superintendent of Police Ram. L. Arasiddi and other senior officers camped near the reservoir. Koppal district in-charge Minister Shivaraj Tangadagi visited the reservoir early on Sunday and held discussions with the dam authorities.

NDA ALLIES DIFFER » PAGE 4

Soaking in the rain

Amid heavy rainfall, people are seen walking near India Gate in New Delhi on Sunday. ANI

Govt. primary school teachers, resident doctors' strike today

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Functioning of all government medical colleges and several government primary schools across the State is likely be affected on Monday.

Resident doctors in these colleges and thousands of primary school teachers have announced they will go on a strike over a number of their demands, mainly over their pay.

While teachers have announced only a one-day strike, resident doctors have said that theirs will be indefinite, till their demands are met.

The Department of Public Instruction has issued a circular warning those teachers who go on a strike of disciplinary action. However, the primary school teachers' association has announced that over 50,000 primary school teachers will strike work, close schools if needed and participate in the strike on Monday.

Minister for School Education and Literacy Madhu Bangarappa tried to broker a truce with the teachers on August 8, but failed. Even as the association has stuck to its stand of striking work, B.B. Cauvery, Commissioner, Department of Public Instruction, who issued the circular warning of disciplinary action against teachers who strike work, said that the schools would function as usual on Monday.

Meanwhile, the Karnataka Association of Resident Doctors began a silent protest on August 5, demanding pay revision. However, the association announced an indefinite strike from Monday, as they claimed that there had been no positive response to the silent protest and that their demands had not been met.

They announced that they would withdraw from all medical services except emergency services.

"We deeply regret any inconvenience this may cause to patients and the public, but we believe this step is crucial to ensure our voices are heard and our grievances are addressed," the association said in a statement.

Minister for School Education and Literacy Madhu Bangarappa tried to broker a truce with the teachers on August 8, but failed.

> We deeply regret any inconvenience this may cause to patients and the public, but we believe this step is crucial to ensure our voices are heard and our grievances are addressed.
>
> KARNATAKA ASSOCIATION OF RESIDENT DOCTORS

RELATED REPORT » PAGE 2

NEARBY

Three killed in accident near Nelamangala

BENGALURU
Three people – two labourers in a goods carrier and a pedestrian – were killed and five others severely injured in a road accident in Kuluvanahalli village near Nelamangala on National Highway 48, on the outskirts of the city on Sunday evening. The stretch has reported over 15 fatal and non-fatal accidents in the past month, a senior police official said. » Page 2

EDUCATIONPLUS » PAGE 7

Khandre terms sale of land by HMT 'illegal'; seeks recovery of 599 acres

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The HMT Heritage Centre and Museum in Bengaluru. The 599 acres of land is valued at over ₹10,000 crore in the market. FILE PHOTO

Terming the sale of land by Hindustan Machine Tools (HMT) at Jalahalli here as "illegal", the State government has ordered taking back 599 acres of forestland on the company premises.

It has also decided to withdraw an interim application (IA) filed – without the State Cabinet's nod – before the Supreme Court to denotifiy the land which is valued at over ₹10,000 crore in the market.

Forest Minister B. Eshwar Khandre has written to the Additional Chief Secretary, Forests, Environment and Ecology to recover 599 acres in the Peenya-Jalahalli plantation survey no. 1 and 2, which had been declared as reserve forest under Section 9 of the Forest Rules, 1878.

Though the land was declared as forest on June 11, 1886 in Mysore State, HMT sold the land illegally to many government departments, institutions, and private parties. About 281 acres of open area of the 469 given to HMT is being sought to be recovered immediately, a note from the Minister's office noted.

It said that while the process of recovering the area under Section 64 A of the Forest Act had been ordered in the past, the Minister expressed dissatisfaction that forest officials had not acted on it.

He has also ordered an inquiry into the case. Process under 64 A had been completed for 201 acres that was sold by HMT and the PSU had not appealed against it, the Forest Minister noted.

Tracing the case, the note said that then Deputy Commissioner of Bengaluru, Hanuman, transferred the land to HMT through a gift deed in 1963.

"However, there is no gazette notification for this. The land has not been denotified for any non-forest purposes. Under the Forest Act, there is no provision to give away forestland through a gift deed. Hence, the land sold by HMT is still forestland. The Supreme Court has also said that a forest is always a forest," the note said, citing a SC ruling in the case of allotment of forestland in Sharavathi project rehabilitation.

Mr. Khandre directed the withdrawal of IA filed before the Supreme Court by the Forest Department in 2020 since it was filed without obtaining the Cabinet's approval.

"This move has raised several suspicions. The IA has to be withdrawn immediately and the matter needs to be investigated," the Minister said in his note.

Unfulfilled hopes and what-ifs — India's recurring theme in Paris

The country had six fourth-place finishes in the 2024 Summer Olympic Games, a sobering marker of a successful failure; a place that deems you worthier than the rest, but still not deserving of a medal; sport is cruel but for none more than those who land just outside the podium

GETTY IMAGES

Bhavin Shivaa

Lakshya Sen. Mirabai Chanu. Arjun Babuta. Manu Bhaker. Dhiraj Bommadevara, Ankita Bhakat. Anantjeet Singh Naruka and Maheshwari Chauhan. If there's one thing connecting the stories of these athletes - apart from representing India at the Olympics, that is - it is that all of these athletes finished immediately outside the podium in their respective events at the 2024 Summer Games in Paris.

You can ask any athlete which position they would not like to finish in, and every one of them will tell you that it is the dreaded fourth place. Sport is cruel but for none more than those who finish in fourth.

It is the sobering marker of a successful failure – a place that deems you worthier than the rest, but still not deserving of a medal. So close, yet so far.

Ace shuttler Lakshya Sen missing out on the bronze medal will arguably be the biggest heartbreak of the lot. He entered his debut Summer Games seeded fourteenth, following a breakthrough year in 2022 where he finished first in the Commonwealth Games and was part of the team that claimed a historic win at the Thomas Cup for India.

The 22-year-old was in blistering form in the group stages as he hammered all three of his opponents, including World No.3 Jonatan Cristie, without dropping a single set. He also brushed past compatriot H.S.Prannoy in the round of 16 tie. The two brightest sparks from a nation known for its fireworks, it was saddening that only one would make it out. Lakshya was challenged in his quarterfinal against 12th seed Chou Tien-chen, but eventually prevailed.

Into the unknown

With that, he had entered uncharted territory as he became the first Indian to make it to the last four of the badminton Men's singles at the Olympics.

Viktor Axelsen was up next. A formidable shuttler who sent shivers down the spine of his opponents. The reigning Olympic champion towers over the field at 194cm and is sculpted for peak performance.

The Dane enjoyed a 7-1 advantage over Lakshya coming into the fixture. Despite the Indian's spirited fight, that head-to-head skewed further in Axelsen's favour.

"Lakshya could have won today. But he tensed up because he's gone where no Indian has gone before. I've gone through that myself. He's going to be a real contender at the Los Angeles Olympics in 4 years," Axelsen said.

In the bronze medal match against Malaysia'a Lee Zii Jia, Lakshya charged to a 21-13 win in the first game.

It was a familiar tale for Lakshya in the bronze medal clash against Malaysian Lee Zii Jia. The 14th-ranked shuttler seemed to have shaken his semifinal woes as came in thundering, winning his first game 21-13. However, the ghosts of Axelsen came back to haunt him.

It was a pitiful sight indeed. The Indian had no response to the Malaysian's relentless rockets and capitulated to a disheartening 21-13, 16-21, 11-21 loss, finishing fourth overall.

Matter of margins

Mirabai Chanu, the golden girl of Indian weightlifting, was a top medal contender for her nation going into Paris on the back of an unprecedented silver at Tokyo 2020.

Having recovered from a hip injury she picked up at the 2023 Huangzhou Asian Games which sidelined her for five months, Mirabai persevered with a fire in her eyes but with generous caution as even the slightest mismanagement of her injury would damage her hopes of competing in Paris.

The only event she took part in in 2024 was the World Championship where she finished 12th with a combined lift of 184kg, enough to book her ticket to the French capital.

In her third Olympics, a medal would have meant that she would have become only the third Indian to win an individual medal in consecutive games alongside P.V. Sindhu (2016, 2020) and Neeraj Chopra (2020, 2024).

Mirabai matched her highest snatch effort of 88kg in her third attempt while she recorded 111kg in clean and jerk. The target was set. The podium visible. The Indian needed a cumulative total of over 200kg going into her final clean and jerk attempt to secure her medal.

Unfortunately, Mirabai couldn't replicate her Tokyo heroics, falling agonisingly short, as she failed to complete the 114kg lift and finished outside the medal bracket.

India's most successful showing at the Paris Olympics came 300km away from the French capital. The fabled Chateauroux Shooting Centre in central France was home to all shooting events and witnessed the Indian contingent win three bronze medals in the Women's 10m Air Pistol (Manu Bhaker), the Mixed 10m Air Pistol (Manu Bhaker and Sarabjot Singh), and the Men's 50m Rifle Three Positions (Swapnil Kusale).

But Chateauroux also toyed with Indian hearts as much as it gave them joy with Indians finishing fourth in three events at the shooting centre.

The fact that it was closest to the podium magnified the distance from the mythical metal. Inches seemed like light years. It was only apt that the minuscule margins of elite sport were highlighted by shooting, a sport where millimetres are the difference between first and last.

In her quest for a historic third medal at the same Games, Manu Bhaker was on course for glory once more after two bronze medals already in the bag. She qualified for the final of the Women's 25m Pistol Shooting by finishing second in Rapid qualification and third in Precision.

The two-time Olympic medallist started the final strong and was consistently in the podium places as the final approached its last four contenders. Manu, tied for second at 26 points after Series 7, one away from the eventual winner, F. Yang Jiin and one ahead of Hungarian Veronika Major, needed only a middling score of three from her next five to secure a medal as Major missed two.

Manu who had missed only two of her previous 10 shots, misfired thrice in the deciding round to finish level on points with Major and head into a shoot-off for a medal.

History was hanging in the balance. You could see the headlines being written. Magical Manu secures a golden hat-trick of bronzes in Paris. Could the Indian etch her name in the highest echelon of sport?

She started strong by making her first two shots while her Hungarian counterpart missed the second. She was three good shots away. Did she have the mettle?

The third time proved unlucky as the Indian missed while her competitor faced a better result. Level on points, Manu was still in contention.

But the nerves got the better of her as she missed her second consecutive shot, all but sealing her fate. Another bang later, it was over. Manu, still magical, would have to settle for a bronze double and a grey fourth place that came agonisingly close to being as colourful as the others.

Chateauroux, a beauty when it wants to be but a beast otherwise, spurred similar fates for Manu's compatriots as Arjun Babuta, and Anantjeet Singh and Maheshwari Chauhan missed out on medals in the Men's 10m Air Rifle and the Mixed Skeet Team events respectfully.

Paris, the city of light, had given India a few glimmers of hope in an Olympic campaign otherwise dulled by close calls and what-could-have-beens.

THE GIST

- India was placed 71st in the medals table with one silver and five bronze
- Lakshya looked on course for a podium finish, but lost the plot and the medal
- Mirabai, returning from injury, fell short narrowly
- It was a similar story for shooters Manu and Babuta, the skeet pair of Anantjeet-Maheshwari and the archery duo of Dhiraj-Ankita

AP & RITU RAJ KONWAR

Pay parity is the main demand of teachers and resident doctors

Minister of School Education and Literacy Madhu Bangarappa held a meeting on August 8 with the teachers' association; however, the association wasn't satisfied with the assurances made and decided to go ahead with the strike

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The main demand of both primary school teachers in government schools and resident doctors at government medical colleges across the State, who have announced a strike, is pay parity. These have been long-standing issues and attempts by the State government to negotiate with them have failed.

Primary School Teachers (PSTs) demands include designation of qualified government primary school teachers appointed to teach classes 1 to 7 before 2016 as Graduate Primary Teachers (GPT) and changes in Cadre and Recruitment Rules (C&R rules) in this regard.

There are over 1.4 lakh primary school teachers teaching today, recruited before 2016 for classes 1 to 7. However, in 2016, acting on an order issued by the Union government, the State recruited graduates to teach for classes 6 to 8. There are over 25,000 GPTs in the State today.

Following this, the State government amended the C&R rules and designated those recruited before 2016 as Primary School Teachers (PSTs) who will teach from classes 1 to 5, and GPTs to teach from classes 6 to 8. It has been a long-standing demand of the Primary School Teachers' Association to consider graduates among PSTs recruited before 2016, give them promotion as headmasters and ensure pay parity with GPTs.

In the wake of the teachers' call for protest, Madhu Bangarappa, Minister of School Education and Literacy, held a meeting with the office-bearers of the association on August 8 and promised to review the legal glitches and court cases for designating qualified PSTs as GPTs. However, the association has said the assurance had not been satisfactory and announced a one-day strike at Freedom Park, Bengaluru, on Monday.

Doctors in Karnataka argue that their stipend fails to cover living costs, academic expenses, and family needs. FILE PHOTO

"It is a 'do or die' struggle of primary school teachers. Thousands of teachers who are graduates are suffering without promotions only because they were recruited before 2016. Many of them even retired from service without a promotion after serving for 30 years. The State government has not responded to our repeated appeals, so a struggle is inevitable," said Chandrashekara Nuggali, General Secretary of the association.

The association has termed the circular issued by B.B. Cauvery, Commissioner, Department of Public Instruction, warning of disciplinary action against teachers who strike work, as a "futile attempt to suppress the struggle".

Appeal for strike call to be withdrawn

Development educationist V.P. Niranjanaradhya said that there are around 6,523 primary and higher primary schools running with single teachers in the State, which will likely shut on Monday due to the protest. "Along with learning, there is a possibility that the children will miss their milk, eggs and midday meals. So the association should withdraw the protest and the government should take appropriate action to fulfil their demands," he said.

Stipend

The Karnataka Resident Doctors' Association, which includes interns, postgraduates, super-specialty and senior residents, in government medical colleges across the State, who have announced an indefinite strike from Monday, have been demanding pay parity in stipend with residents in other States, terming their stipend "unjustifiable".

"Our stipend is about 50% of what doctors in other states receive. It fails to cover living costs, academic expenses, and family needs, exacerbated by inflation. Despite providing essential services and working long hours, our stipends remain unchanged and insufficient. Also, the fees for medical courses are one among the highest in Karnataka in comparison with other states," a statement from KARD said.

Three killed, five injured in accident near Nelamangala

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The spot where a goods vehicle and a canter collided near Nelamangala on Sunday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Three people - two labourers in a goods carrier and a pedestrian - were killed and five others severely injured in a road accident in Kuluvanahalli village near Nelamangala on National Highway 48, on the outskirts of the city on Sunday evening.

The stretch on which the fatality occurred is an accident blackspot, which has reported over 15 fatal and non-fatal accidents in the past month, a senior police official said. The accident occurred when the goods vehicle the two deceased labourers were travelling in collided with a canter when the goods vehicle took a U-turn at a T junction in Kuluvanahalli village.

The deceased have been identified as Husainappa Asif, 32, Narsappa Beerappa 35, labourers from Yadgir, residing on the outskirts of the city, who had gone to work on Sunday to earn extra money and were returning home in a goods vehicle that had offered to drop them home, and Shivanna Betta Somappa, 50, a pedestrian from Talenahalli village near Dabaspet.

C.K. Baba, Superintendent of Police, Bengaluru Rural District, who visited the spot, said that the accident occurred as the goods vehicle carrying these labourers, took a free left turn onto the highway at the T junction without observing oncoming traffic. "Concurrently, the canter traveling on the main highway from Tumakuru towards Bengaluru, was speeding and collided with the rear of the goods vehicle. At the same time, a pedestrian was crossing the highway through the median," he said.

Due to the impact of the collision, both the vehicles were severely damaged and blocked traffic for sometime. The police roped in emergency services to pull the victims out of the vehicles and shift them to hospitals.

Fixing the blackspot

The district police have now listed out their recommendations to fix the accident blackspot. These recommendations include installation of advance warning signs well ahead of the junction to alert drivers about the upcoming T-junction and free left turn and to put up speed control measures like rumble strips or speed bumps before the junction to ensure vehicles reduce speed.

The police have also recommended designated pedestrian crossings with clear markings and signage away from high-speed traffic areas.

More than a lakh visit flower show over the weekend

Mahima Nagaraju and Syeda Zainab
BENGALURU

Visitors at the 216th edition of the annual Independence Day flower show at Lalbagh Botanical Garden Glass House, in Bengaluru on Saturday. K. MURALI KUMAR

The 216th edition of the popular Independence Day flower show in Lalbagh, based on the theme 'Universal Scholar, Architect of the Constitution, Bharat Ratna, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar' this year, attracted over a lakh visitors over the weekend.

"Since the inaugural day, we have had a total of 1,89,500 visitors which has brought us a ticket revenue of ₹63 lakh. While 50,000 people visited the show on Saturday, 68,500 visited on Sunday," said M. Jagadeesh, Joint Director, Parks and Gardens, Horticulture Department.

The 32-ft. floral installation of the Parliament House in Delhi and one that showcased the arch of a stupa as the backdrop to a white Buddha statue captivated the attention of the visitors.

"It is a very unique theme and there is a need for it in society right now. Untouchability is still prevalent in our country and to abolish it, people should know how others have struggled to erase untouchability. It is a beautiful idea to showcase this with flowers," Alfina, a UPSC aspirant who was visiting the show on Saturday, said.

The show also attracted some foreign tourists. Susan, a 77-year-old American tourist and second-time visitor, said she loved that the show honoured ordinary flowers. "It looks so gorgeous together and some flowers here also grow in Alabama in the U.S. The dahlias, coxcombs, and gerberas are just marvelous," she said.

However, with many people crowding the installations to take photographs, some visitors complained about not getting to appreciate the models well enough. "There are large groups that are taking pictures and you have to wait till they are done. This is very inconvenient," said Cecelia, a retiree in her 60s.

Suggesting that the crowds pile up partly because of youngsters taking selfies, Jayanthi Venkatesh, a lawyer, said, "If they could have a couple of spots with photo booths for people who come exclusively for photographs, it would help reduce the crowd."

The flower show which was inaugurated on August 8 will conclude on August 19.

Camera in women's washroom: Coffee shop employee held

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Sadashivanagar police have arrested a 23-year-old employee of Third Wave Coffee at BEL Road in Bengaluru for placing a mobile phone in the women's washroom.

The accused staffer, Manoj, is a resident of Guttahalli in the city and a native of Shivamogga. He was arrested after a woman customer discovered the phone, placed inside the restroom's dustbin, in the recording mode facing the toilet. The woman raised an alarm, prompting the management to rush to her help. Upon questioning, they found that the phone belonged to Manoj.

The accused had been working at Third Wave Coffee's BEL Road outlet for the last six months. He was terminated from the job immediately following the discovery.

The incident came to light on Saturday following a social media post. Basundhara (@gangsofcinepur) described the episode in an Instagram story.

"I was at a @thirdwavecoffeeindia outlet in Bengaluru this morning, and this is what happened: A woman found a phone in the washroom, hidden in the dustbin, with video recording on for about 2 hours, facing the toilet seat. It was on flight mode so that it makes no sound, and was carefully hidden in the dustbin bag which had a hole made in it so that only the camera is exposed," the Instragram story read.

"It was quickly found that the phone belongs to one of the men working there. The police was called and they arrived soon enough, and action is being taken.

Responding to the post, the outlet posted on X that the concerned person had been terminated.

"We regret the unfortunate incident at our BEL Road outlet in Bengaluru and want to emphasise that such actions are absolutely unacceptable at Third Wave Coffee. We acted swiftly to address the situation by immediately terminating the person & ensuring the safety of our customers," the post read.

The police, based on a complaint, have detained the accused on charges of Section 77 (voyeurism) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) and relevant sections of the Information Technology (IT) Act. The phone has had been confiscated for further investigation to ascertain the motive of the accused, a police officer said.

Pose a question to Transport Minister Ramalinga Reddy

#THTALKSBENGALURU

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Have a question about HSRP number plates, the Shakti scheme, KSRTC, BMTC buses, or the Muzrai Department? Get answers from Ramalinga Reddy, Karnataka's Transport and Muzrai Minister, as *The Hindu* will pose your questions to him on #THTalksBengaluru.

Mr. Reddy, an eight-time Congress MLA from Bengaluru, represents the BTM Layout constituency in Bengaluru.

He has previously held various portfolios, including Finance, Industry, Agricultural Marketing, Food and Civil Supplies, Bengaluru Development, and Primary and Secondary Education.

A seasoned politician with a strong grasp of Bengaluru's civic affairs, Mr. Reddy began his political career with the Bengaluru City Corporation Council from 1983 to 1988.

Readers can submit their questions about the Transport Department, State-run road transport corporations (RTCs) – KSRTC, BMTC, NWKRTC, and KKRTC or the Muzrai Department via email to thtalksbengaluru@thehindu.co.in before 12 p.m. on August 13. The interaction will be published on August 14.

SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY

TENDER NOTICE NO. 19 MYS 2024-25-OT-20 Dated-31-07-2024

The undersigned, on behalf of the President of India, invites E-Tenders for the following works.

Item of work	Approximate value
PTFE TYPE SHORT NEUTRAL SECTION ASSEMBLY (PHASE BREAK) AS PER RDSO'S SPECIFICATION NO. TI/SPC/OHE/SNS/0000 REV.-1 WITH A&C SLIP NO.1.MAKE: GALLAND or ARTHURFURRY OR SIMILAR Tender no. L9245896	Rs. 94,84,000.00

Last date of submission of bid for tender **Upto : 10.30 Hours on 21.08.2024**

For details log on : **www.ireps.gov.in**

Senior Divisional Materials Manager, Mysuru

PUB/331/AAD360/PRB/SWR/2024-25

South Western Railway - SWR SWRRLY SWRRLY

SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY

OPEN TENDER NOTICE NO.17/SBC/24 of 31.07.2024

The undersigned, on behalf of the President of India, invites E-Tenders for the following works.

SN	Item of work	Approximate value (in Rs.)
1	Sr. DEN/South/ Bangalore Section: Manufacturing,supply and stacking of machine crushed track ballast including leading and loading at Periya Naga Thunnai depot and Karuvalli Cess in connection with the work of Bangalore-Salem section: CTR(P) for a length of 16km from 11/900-23/0 and 72/100-77/0 SL to replace D Mark Rails.	Rs. 2,22,72,084
2	**Subwork-I: Bengaluru-** Salem Section: Strengthening of Bank by providing standard width in isolated locations for a length of 18.85km from Km 145/650-165/600 SL in ADEN/ Dharmapuri section. **Subwork-II: Bengaluru** - Salem Section : Cess work in connection with the work of through Ballast recoupment of points and crossings at Dharmapuri, Rayakkottai, Periya Naga Thunai, Kelamangalam and Banaswadi yards-Total 11 Nos in ADEN/ Dharmapuri section. Maintenance period is 6 months or one monsoon period whichever is later	Rs. 3,74,99,976
3	Bengaluru - Salem section: Construction of RCC side drain for a length of 1500m in connection with the work of Strengthening of bank by providing standard width in isolated locations for a length of 18.85km from 145/650-165/600 SL in ADEN/Dharmapuri section. Maintenance is 6 months	Rs. 1,77,64,723
4	**Subwork-I:** Bengaluru-Salem section: Hosur - Provision of STP Tank of 50KLD Capacity. **Subwork-II**:Bengaluru-Salem section: Dharmapuri-Provision of STP tank of 50 KLD capacity. Maintenance period is 24 months	Rs. 3,66,88,621

Last date of submission of bid for tender **Up to : 15.00 Hours on 27.08.2024**

For details log on : www.ireps.gov.in

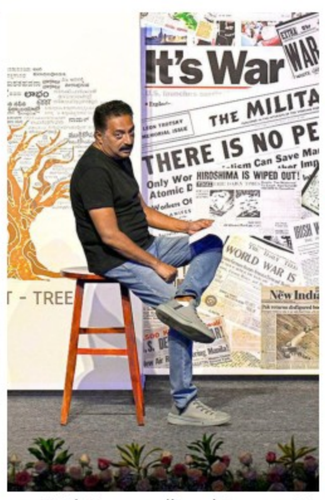
Senior Divisional Engineer (Co-Ordination) Bengaluru

PUB/322/AAD360/PRB/SWR/2024-25

South Western Railway - SWR SWRRLY SWRRLY

B. Jeyamohan awarded inaugural Book Brahma Sahitya Puraskara

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU



(L-R) Hindustani vocalist Pandit M. Venkatesh Kumar giving a performance, actor Prakash Raj, and film director Girish Kasaravalli and Sumana Kittur at Book Brahma Literature Festival in Bengaluru. K. BHAGYA PRAKASH

Tamil and Malayalam writer B. Jeyamohan was awarded the inaugural Book Brahma Sahitya Puraskara - 2024, as the three-day Book Brahma Literature Festival drew to a close in the city on Sunday. The award is given to an Indian language writer and carries a purse of ₹2 lakh.

"A writer who writes in both Tamil and Malayalam, he is acclaimed for authoring *Venmurasu*, the world's longest novel, which offers a reinterpretation of the Mahabharata. Beyond his novels, Jeyamohan is recognised as a distinguished short-story writer and critic," Book Brahma, a Kannada literature and book catalogue portal, said in its statement.

The third and the concluding day of the literature festival, that brought together writers of all south Indian languages, had multilingual actor Prakash Raj perform poetry from multiple languages in a session titled: "Diverse Languages, Same Feeling". He demonstrated how emotions transcend linguistic boundaries.

Noted Hindustani classical vocalist Pt. Venkatesh Kumar also performed at the event.

Cold War nuke tests light up a bug in present-day climate models

A study by an international team of researchers, recently published in the journal *Science*, suggests plants absorb more carbon dioxide from the atmosphere than expected and also store it for a shorter duration, before releasing it into their surroundings

Karthik Vinod

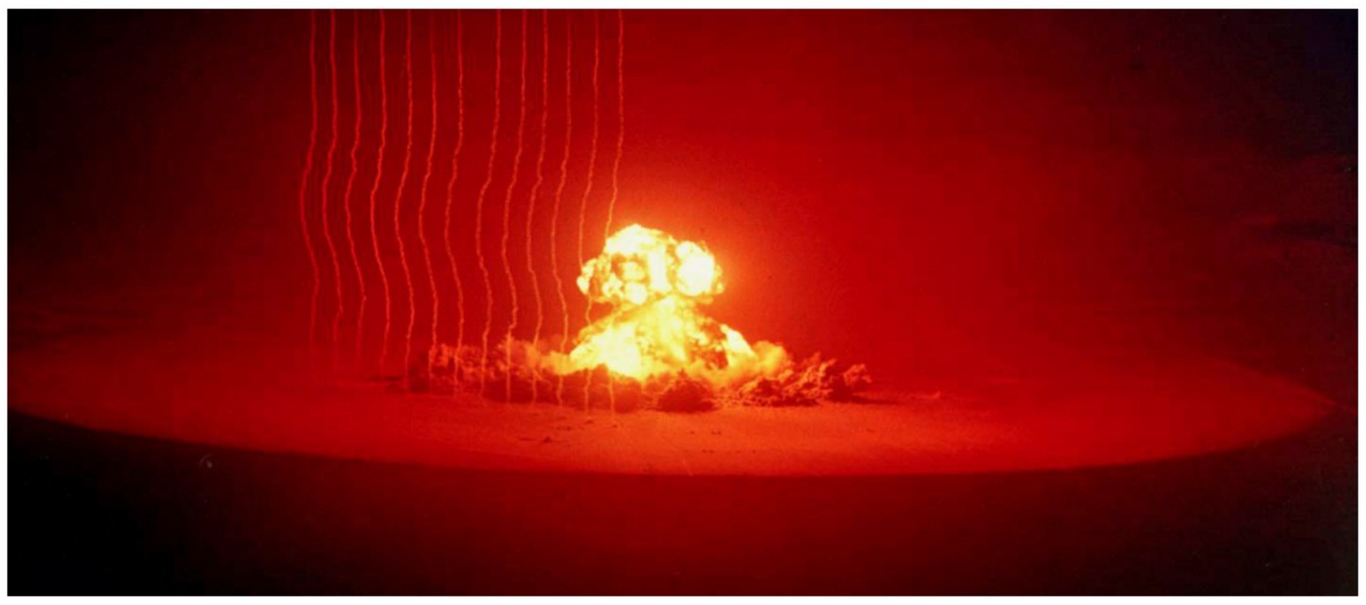
For billions of years, the carbon cycle has been nature's solution to removing excess carbon from the atmosphere.

In nature, volcanic eruptions and life forms vent carbon dioxide (CO_2) into the atmosphere. Plants and trees then draw in and store this CO_2 during photosynthesis.

Of late, the carbon cycle has been a focus area in climate mitigation. Plants' ability to lock away carbon produced by burning fossil fuels can offer respite. Both fossil-fuel corporations and governments have subscribed to this idea as they look for ways to offset their still-rising carbon footprints.

But a study recently published in the journal *Science* by an international team of researchers suggests plants absorb more CO_2 from the atmosphere than expected and also store it for a shorter duration than expected before releasing it into their surroundings.

To establish their findings, the researchers investigated the remains of nuclear bomb tests the U.S. and the Soviet Union conducted in the 1960s using climate models.



A view of the nuclear test Upshot-Knothole Annie, conducted by the U.S. on March 17, 1953. PUBLIC DOMAIN

Relics of the Cold War

The dozens of nuclear bomb tests during the Cold War in the second half of the 20th century maintained an atmosphere of trepidation worldwide and, scientists later found, an opportunity for climate research.

"As terrible as they were, they've been quite useful to scientists," Heather Graven, a climate physicist at Imperial College London and the study's lead author, said.

The explosions sprayed radioactive material around the planet, including a lot of it in the atmosphere. One of them was carbon-14, an isotope also called radiocarbon. Its atom's nucleus has two neutrons more than in the nucleus of the more common carbon-12. Radiocarbon is naturally found in minute quantities, but the nuclear bomb tests steadily deposited more and more of it in the atmosphere.

In 1963, Cold War powers signed the Limited Test Ban Treaty (LTBT) that prohibited nuclear testing over land, air, and under water. The atmospheric radiocarbon concentration stopped increasing beyond this year. Dr. Graven and her team used models to track the change in this level between 1963 and 1967 and found that it dropped steadily.

Often, radiocarbon bonds with oxygen to form CO_2. Plants, trees, and other vegetation absorb this CO_2 during photosynthesis to produce food and, ultimately, energy. The researchers found that the models suggested the radiocarbon was moving into vegetation from the atmosphere.

'The whole system is cycling faster'

Plants need food, to survive and they make it themselves. They absorb CO_2 from the atmosphere during photosynthesis and use it to make glucose. A plant consumes some of the glucose, and some it stores as starch in its leaves. In this process, some carbon is also lost when the plant exhales CO_2 as it respirates.Scientists don't have a direct way to measure the rates at which vegetation loses and gains carbon. But they have been able to use satellite data to estimate how much carbon vegetation around the world hosts.

The researchers behind the new study used climate models to estimate the amount of carbon stored in vegetation around the planet in a year. Previous studies had shown this value to be at least 43-76 billion tonnes of carbon per year worldwide. But the study team said it could be around 80 billion tonnes per year, with most of the carbon being stored in leaves and finer roots, i.e., the non-woody parts of the plant.

If the higher value is accurate, plants must also be shedding their carbon sooner than thought. Otherwise, the researchers figured, they would have more carbon than estimated based on satellite data.

The findings also shed light on how quickly carbon is exchanged between vegetation and the atmosphere. "The whole system is kind of cycling faster than we thought before," Dr. Graven said.

> In nature, volcanic eruptions and life forms vent carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. Plants and trees then draw in and store this CO_2 during photosynthesis

But Raghu Murtugudde, a climate scientist at IIT Bombay who wasn't involved in the study, advised caution. "To say what the actual impact on the carbon cycle is would be a challenge," he told *The Hindu*. "Theoretically you want to include all the details [in the models], but there are missing understandings, a lack of data, and irreducible uncertainties."

He said the models simulating carbon stored in vegetation in the study make assumptions that, if tweaked, could change the results significantly.

The study's co-author, Will Wieder, a climate scientist with the U.S. National Center for Atmospheric Research, said Dr. Murtugudde's statement was "accurate" but also "short-sighted."

Radioactive representation

In 1995, the World Climate Research Program set up the Coupled Model Intercomparison Project (CMIP), which prepares climate projections that inform the U.N.'s climate reports.

For the CMIP, scientific institutions in several countries pool their individual climate models together to produce better projections. But most of these models haven't been tested with radiocarbon data.

It's not difficult to input this data, according to Dr. Graven. "Some of them haven't really bothered to do so."

In fact, only one model, the 'Community Earth System Model 2' developed by the U.S. University Corporation for Atmospheric Research, accounted for radiocarbon in its simulations – but it also predicted plants had absorbed much less radiocarbon than Dr. Graven & co. found they should.

Climate models have always had uncertainties.

"They are not wrong. They are imperfect," Dr. Murtugudde said. "It's like a car that pulls to one side, but it can be driven. So it needs to be looked at by a mechanic to make sure it eventually drives straight."

The CMIP models used in the study included some of the latest versions (5 and 6). The shortfalls highlighted in the study are more of a stepping stone for future research into climate modelling, according to Dr. Wieder. "This kind of information is critical as we work to improve the models for CMIP 7 and beyond."

This said, all these climate scientists agreed that radiocarbon needs to be better represented in climate predictions. So far, radiocarbon inclusion has been plagued by "limited resources, both funding and effort, available for model development and observational research," Govindasamy Bala, a climate physicist at the Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru, not involved in the study, told *The Hindu*.

"Representation of isotopes, ice sheet dynamics, permafrost, etc. in models is likely to gain momentum in the future," he added.

(Karthik Vinod is a freelance science journalist and co-founder of Ed Publica. He has masters' degrees in astrophysics and science, technology and society. krtvin18@gmail.com)

THE GIST

- Radiocarbon released into the atmosphere from nuclear tests bonds with oxygen to form CO_2. Plants absorb this CO_2 during photosynthesis to produce food and, ultimately, energy
- Models show carbon stored in vegation ranges from 43–76 billion to 80 billion tonnes per year. If the higher value is accurate, plants must be shedding carbon sooner. 'The whole system is cycling faster than we thought before'
- Scientists agree that radiocarbon needs to be better represented in climate predictions. So far it has been plagued by 'limited resources available for model development and observational research'

BIG SHOT

A drone view shows smoke rising from burning vegetation in the Amazon rainforest in Apui, Amazonas State, Brazil, last week. The blazes are off to their worst start in 20 years for the rainforest, according to government satellite data, following a record-breaking drought. They may pose a tough test for President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, who has staked his global reputation on Brazil's environmental stewardship ahead of hosting the COP30 climate summit next year. REUTERS

WHAT IS IT?

Perseid meteor shower

Vasudevan Mukunth

The Perseid meteor shower this year began around July and will last until late August, but their peak activity is going on now — between August 11 and 13. The shower should be visible to the naked eye in many places between midnight and dawn, especially in the northern hemisphere. Local weather conditions could affect this, however.

A meteor shower is a raining-down of meteors over the earth from space at a particular time of year. The Perseid meteors are debris left behind by the comet Swift-Tuttle, which orbits the Sun in an elliptical path that takes 133 years to complete once.

When the earth moves through the cloud of debris intersecting its path around the Sun, its gravity pulls the debris towards itself, producing the meteor shower. In the 1990s, scientists studying the Swift-Tuttle comet noticed there was an important chance it could strike the earth or the moon in mid-2126. The impact could be powerful because the comet is 26 km wide. Fortunately, when scientists performed more careful calculations prompted by this concern, they found the earth was safe from a Swift-Tuttle impact for at least two millennia more.

The Perseids shower itself doesn't threaten the earth: most meteors burn up in the atmosphere. Some that take a more tangential path through the air produce small fireballs. During its peak, the shower can produce more than 60 meteors per hour.

Perseid meteors streak past in the night sky near Amman, Jordan, in the early hours of August 12, 2004. ALI JAREKJI/REUTERS

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Deadline extension: Eateries expect 10% increase in business

However, even with permission, not all establishments plan to stay open till 1 a.m. yet; the owners will decide on this based on the footfall they get during the late hours of the night

Jahnavi T. R.
BENGALURU

Following the recent Government Order allowing all commercial establishments in the city to be open till 1 a.m., expected to be a big boost to the city's nightlife, industry insiders expect that this will translate to an increase in their business by at least 10%. While some establishments have already begun to stay open till 1 a.m., the others are recruiting more staff and figuring out the logistical aspects.

While up until now, only bars and restaurants were permitted to do so, now even eateries, bakeries, ice cream parlours and coffee shops can stay open past midnight.

Ever since the new rule was announced Namma Filter Coffee in Jayanagar, which used to be open till 12 a.m., has extended its hours to 1 a.m. "We actually get a lot of family crowds around midnight. Now that we are open for longer, we are seeing at least a 10% increase in business. This will only keep growing in the coming days," Ranjith Prakasam, Founder of Namma Filter Coffee.

However, even with permission, not all establishments are going to stay open till 1 a.m. The owners are making this decision based on the footfall they get during the late hours of the night. "At least over 20% of businesses will keep open until 1 a.m. This blanket rule has strengthened our businesses especially those outside the limits of the Commissionerate, but in BBMP limits," said P.C. Rao, president, Bruhat Bengaluru Hoteliers' Association (BBHA).

While some establishments in the city have begun to stay open till 1 a.m., the others are still figuring out the logistics. FILE PHOTO

He said that while bars and restaurants in Commissionerate limits were open till 1 a.m. anyway, those in newer areas like Sarjapura, Hoskote, Nelamangala, which were permitted to be open only till 11.30 p.m. until now, will also improve their businesses with the extension.

"Apart from this, the trend is such that people, families in particular, step out for specialty ice creams and coffee at night. To cater to these crowds, owners of these establishments are hiring staff, especially students looking for part-time jobs for their night shifts," Mr. Rao said.

"Time is not a factor for doing business anymore. Gone are the days when everyone worked a 9-5 job. Today there are people who work in shifts throughout the day including at night. Such people should have the freedom to venture out and have fun with their friends when they want," said G.K. Pramod, who runs many hospitality establishments in Bengaluru, speaking about the 1 a.m. deadline rule.

Harassment by police

However, many business owners noted that police harassment remains an issue. "Every night I get a call from one of our shops that they are being harassed by the police," said Venkatesh Shanbhag, owner of a few outlets of Natural Ice Cream in Bengaluru. He said that it will be beneficial for all establishments if all the police stations are sent a circular about the deadline extension.

"Even with the government approval, we have not been able to escape the harassment by the police," Mr. Prakasam also said.

Reorganising workforce

On the business side of it, Mr. Shanbhag said that the crowds at the ice cream parlours after 11 p.m. are mostly young people.

"Our workforce must be reorganised now. We must reschedule shift timings. As it is rainy season, the demand for ice cream is not that great, but post Deepavali, we will open our shops till 1 a.m and we are confident about getting a good number of customers during the night hours," he said.

Timings
BENGALURU

MONDAY, AUG. 12	
RISE	06:07 SET 18:42
RISE	12:04 SET 23:45
TUESDAY, AUG. 13	
RISE	06:07 SET 18:41
RISE	12:57 SET 00:00
WEDNESDAY, AUG. 14	
RISE	06:07 SET 18:41
RISE	13:52 SET 00:30

Bengaluru Weather	max	min
Tumakuru	31	24
Mysuru	30	21
Bengaluru	31	21

Bengaluru Today
28°C The weather will be comfortable with cloudy sky. Night will be pleasant. Few spells of moderate rain and thundershower will occur.

Bengaluru Tomorrow
27°C Day will be comfortable with cloudy sky. Night will be pleasant. Few spells of moderate rain and thundershower to occur.

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THE HINDU
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Man found dead

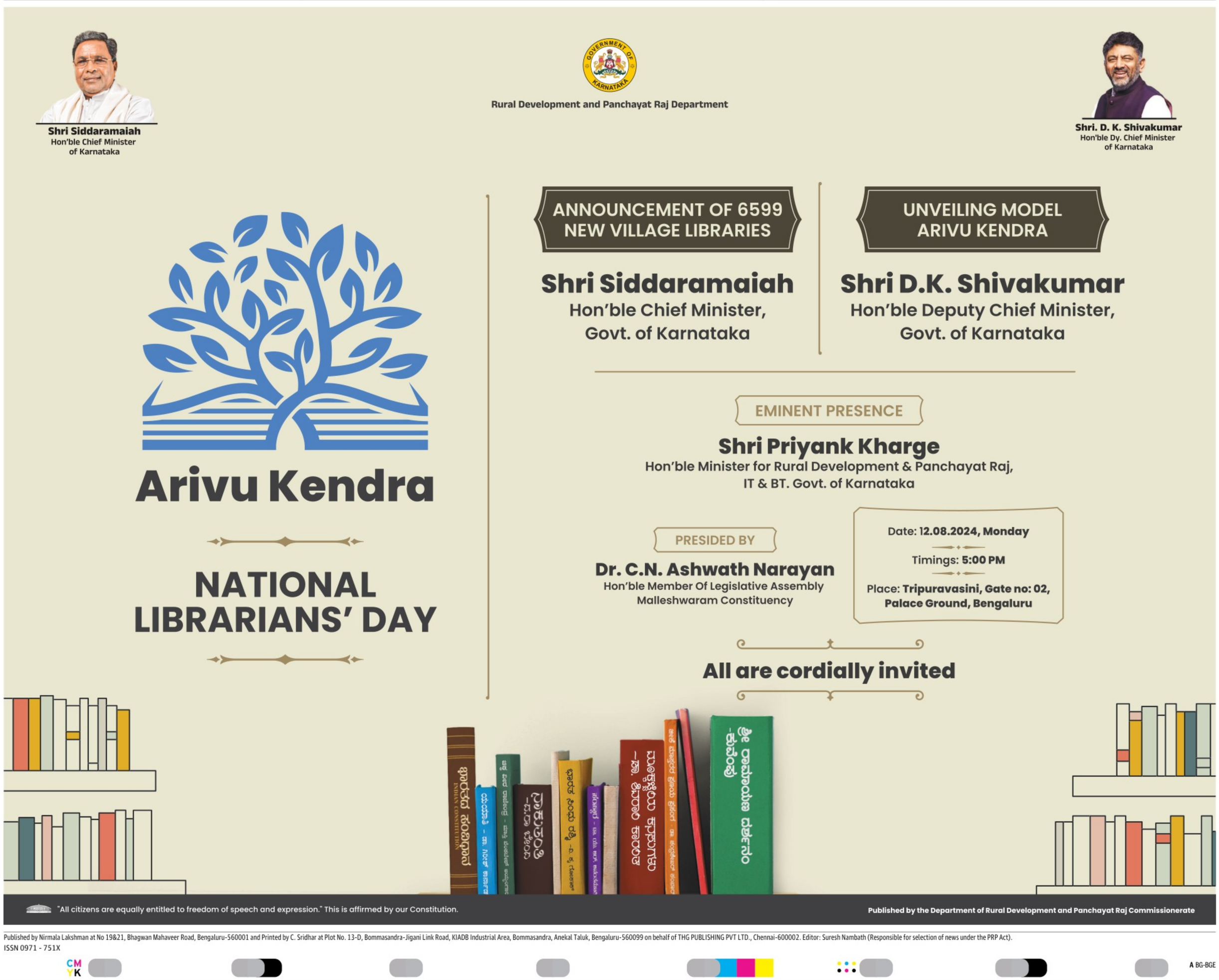
The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

A student of a private college was found dead at his paying guest accommodation in Yelahanka on Sunday. Tanveer, 21, from Budgam in Kashmir, was a second-year BSc student at REVA University.

He was found dead in his room Sunday morning. Other students at accommodation informed the police. The police found a note, in which the deceased said that no one was responsible for his death. Further investigation is on to ascertain whether any foul play was involved.

The police have filed an Unnatural Death Report (UDR) and the body has been sent for autopsy.

(Those in distress or those having suicidal tendencies can call Arogya Sahayavani Ph.: 104 for help.)



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Text&Context

THE HINDU

NEWS IN NUMBERS

The climate-resilient seed varieties introduced by PM

109 Prime Minister Narendra Modi released high-yielding, climate-resilient and bio-fortified seed varieties of agricultural and horticultural crops to enhance farm productivity and farmers' income. PTI

The death toll from the Uganda garbage dump landslide

13 After torrential rain in recent weeks, a chunk of garbage from Kampala city's only landfill site broke off late on Friday, crushing and burying homes on the edge of the site as residents slept. At least 14 people have been rescued so far. REUTERS

The share by which India's coal imports increased

6 In per cent. India's coal import rose to 75.26 million tonnes (MT) in the first quarter of the current fiscal compared to 71.16 MT of coal in the same period of the previous fiscal. Import demand is likely to remain subdued in the coming month. PTI

The China-based companies blacklisted by the U.S.

73 The U.S. banned imports from five more Chinese companies over alleged human rights abuses involving the Uyghurs. They said this was to eradicate forced labour and promote accountability for China's "ongoing genocide against Uyghurs". ANI

Bangladeshis held by BSF while entering into India

11 The Border Security Force has apprehended Bangladeshis who tried to infiltrate into India through the border in West Bengal, Tripura and Meghalaya. The BSF said that it was in touch with Border Guard Bangladesh. PTI

COMPILED BY THE HINDU DATA TEAM

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On amendments to the Waqf Act

What are the various contentious changes being proposed to the 1995 Waqf Act? Why have Muslim bodies and several Opposition parties registered their protest? How has the definition of 'waqf' being altered in the new Bill? What is the way forward?

EXPLAINER

Aaratrika Bhaumik

The story so far:

On August 8, the Union government introduced a Bill in the Lok Sabha to amend the 1995 Waqf Act (1995 Act). The proposed amendments seek to significantly reform the law by enhancing the Centre's regulatory authority over waqf properties and, for the first time, permitting the inclusion of non-Muslim members in Waqf Boards. The draft legislation, proposed to be renamed the Unified Waqf Management, Empowerment, Efficiency, and Development Act, 2024, is heralded by the government as a comprehensive overhaul aimed at enhancing "the efficiency of the administration and management of the waqf properties." However, several Opposition parties have accused the Centre of floating the Bill without adequate consultation with stakeholders, claiming it encroaches upon the Muslim community's religious rights.

Next move: Union Minister Kiren Rijiju with a delegation of Muslim clerics for a meeting on the Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2024 in New Delhi, on August 9. PTI

THE GIST

In Islamic law, waqf refers to property dedicated in the name of God for religious and charitable purposes. This can include any movable or immovable property set aside for the public good, embodying an act of piety that allows Muslims to extend their charitable deeds beyond their lifetime.

One of the most contentious aspects of the Bill is the proposed inclusion of non-Muslims in key waqf institutions — the Central Waqf Council, State Waqf Boards, and waqf tribunals.

After its introduction in Parliament, the Bill was referred to a joint parliamentary panel for further scrutiny after the Congress-led INDIA bloc opposed the proposed law in its present form.

What is India's 'waqf' law?

In Islamic law, waqf refers to property dedicated in the name of God for religious and charitable purposes. This can include any movable or immovable property set aside for the public good, embodying an act of piety that allows Muslims to extend their charitable deeds beyond their lifetime. A waqf can be established through a formal deed or instrument, or a property can be deemed waqf if it has been used for religious or charitable purposes over an extended period. The proceeds from such properties are typically used to maintain mosques, fund schools or provide for the poor. However, once designated as waqf, the property cannot be transferred through inheritance, sold, or given away. A non-Muslim is also allowed to create a waqf as long as the objective of creating it aligns with Islamic principles.

In India, waqfs are regulated by the 1995 Act. Waqf properties are identified and delineated through a survey conducted by the State government. A survey commissioner, appointed under the Act, identifies these properties through local investigations, witness testimonies, and review of public documents. Once identified, the properties are recorded in the State's official gazette, and a list is maintained by the State Waqf Board. Each waqf is managed by a *mutawalli* (custodian) who oversees its administration. While similar to a trust established under the Indian Trusts Act of 1882, a waqf, unlike a trust, cannot be dissolved by a Board.

What is the role of the Waqf Board?

The 1995 Act establishes Waqf Boards in each State to oversee the administration of waqf properties within their jurisdiction. These Boards are considered juristic persons, allowing them to sue or be sued in a court of law. Each State Waqf Board has a chairperson and includes one or two nominees from the State government, Muslim legislators, recognised Islamic scholars, and *mutawalli* of the waqfs. The Act also mandates the appointment of a full-time Chief Executive Officer for each Board, who must be a Muslim by faith and hold at least the rank of Deputy Secretary in the State government.

The Waqf Board is authorised to manage waqf properties and take measures to recover lost assets. It can also sanction the transfer of immovable waqf property through sale, gift, mortgage, exchange, or lease. However, this would require the approval of at least two-thirds of the Board members. Amendments to the 1995 Act in 2013 further strengthened the Board's authority and made the sale of waqf properties nearly impossible, as neither the *mutawalli* nor the Board had the right to sell a waqf property.

In addition to the State Waqf Boards, the legislation also establishes the Central Waqf Council – a national advisory body under the Ministry of Minority Affairs. The Council ensures the uniform administration of waqf properties across the country and is headed by the Union Minister of Minority Affairs. It also advises the Union government on waqf-related issues, including policy development, implementation of waqf laws, and resolution of inter-State disputes.

What are the key changes in the proposed law?

The definition of 'waqf' has been altered. Now, under the Bill, only lawful property owners who have practised Islam for at least five years are authorised to create 'waqf' properties through the execution of formal deeds. This revision abolishes the 'waqf by use' concept – which permits a property to be considered waqf based on usage, even if the original deed was disputed. Traditionally, waqf properties were often dedicated orally until formal documentation became standard practice.

To prevent any fraudulent waqf claims, the Bill states, "Any government property identified or declared as waqf property, before or after the commencement of this Act, shall not be recognised as waqf property." Additionally, the law also permits widows, divorced women, and orphans to be beneficiaries of proceeds from waqf assets.

Under the new Bill, the responsibility of surveying waqf properties, previously managed by survey commissioners under the 1995 Act, will now be assigned to district collectors or officers of equivalent rank. To improve the accuracy of waqf property records, the Bill proposes a centralised registration system. All information about waqf properties must be uploaded to this portal within six months of the new law's enactment. Moreover, any new waqf property registrations must be submitted exclusively through this portal to the Waqf Boards. Notably, the Bill omits section 40, which previously granted waqf tribunals the authority to determine whether a property qualifies as waqf. Instead, it designates the district collector as the final arbiter in such matters. Once a determination is made, the collector must update the revenue records and submit a report to the State government. However, the Bill makes it clear that the disputed property cannot be treated as a waqf property till the collector submits his final report. This implies that until the government decides the issue, a Waqf Board cannot be in control of the disputed land.

One of the most contentious aspects of the Bill is the proposed inclusion of non-Muslims in key waqf institutions – the Central Waqf Council, State Waqf Boards, and waqf tribunals. It empowers the Centre to appoint three Members of Parliament (two from the Lok Sabha and one from the Rajya Sabha) to the Central Waqf Council without specifying that they have to be Muslims. Under the 1995 Act, the three MPs to be included in the Council had to be from the Muslim community. But, as per the new Bill, State Waqf Boards have to include two non-Muslims and two women as members. The composition of waqf tribunals has been changed from a three-member body to a two-member body. The tribunal will now consist of a district judge and an officer of joint secretary rank to the State government. Under the proposed law, tribunals must resolve disputes within six months, with a possible extension of six months.

Additionally, the Bill empowers the Centre to "direct the audit of any waqf at any time by an auditor appointed by the Comptroller and Auditor-General of India, or by any officer designated by the Central Government for that purpose." The Waqf Boards are required to audit their accounts annually, selecting auditors from a panel constituted by the State governments. Penalties will also be levelled upon *mutawallis* if they fail to maintain proper accounts.

The proposed law allows courts to intervene in waqf disputes. It removes the finality of decisions made by waqf tribunals, allowing aggrieved parties to appeal directly to the concerned High Court. This is aimed at increasing judicial oversight and curbing instances of arbitrary exercise of power by Waqf Boards or tribunals.

What are the potential implications?

Professor Faizan Mustafa, noted academician and Vice Chancellor of Chanakya National Law University, Patna, told *The Hindu* that while the amendments are a positive step, it is crucial to implement measures that adequately protect waqf properties without infringing upon the freedom of religion guaranteed under Article 25 of the Constitution.

"Rights vested in waqf properties hundreds of years ago cannot be taken over by executive officers without fair judicial determination," he added.

He also noted that the increased centralisation of waqf property management might undermine the autonomy of Muslim religious institutions. While welcoming the inclusion of non-Muslims and women in waqf governance, Mr. Mustafa questioned, "Will non-Hindus be allowed on Hindu temple boards in States such as Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and Karnataka?" He further asserted that excessive government control is at odds with the principles of economic liberalisation.

After its introduction in Parliament, the Bill was referred to a joint parliamentary panel for further scrutiny after the Congress-led INDIA bloc opposed the proposed law in its present form.

In March last year, the Union government apprised the Delhi High Court that close to 120 petitions challenging provisions of the 1995 Act are pending before courts across the country.

NDA allies differ on Tungabhadra reservoir issue

While BJP blames State government for its failure to take up maintenance work, JD(S) says dam did not have stoplog gate as it is very old; HDK wants experts to be consulted to rectify problem

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Bharatiya Janata Party and the Janata Dal (Secular) differed over the snapping of a chain link of a crest gate at the Tungabhadra reservoir late on Saturday. While the BJP blamed the State government for its failure to take up maintenance work at the reservoir, the JD(S) said the government cannot be blamed.

"Farmers, who had lost their crops last year owing to drought, were looking forward to two crops this year. Good rainfall had resulted in full storage in the reservoir. However, they are now anxious not knowing whether they will get water for even one crop, for which sowing has been completed. The government should have taken up maintenance work when the water level in the reservoir had plummeted," said Leader of Opposition in the Assembly R. Ashok on X.

Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar at the Tungabhadra dam in Vijayanagara district on Sunday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Particularly blaming Deputy Chief Minister and KPCC president D.K. Shivakumar, who holds the Water Resources portfolio, the BJP leader said: "Where does the Deputy Chief Minister have time to look after his portfolio when he is busy in corruption, having an eye on the Chief Minister's post, indulging in factional fights, and arranging money for elections in neighbouring States? If he had held timely meetings to look into dam safety and management, this incident would not have happened."

Accusing the State government of ignoring suggestions from the Tungabhadra Dam Management Committee, former Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai on Sunday said: "The TB reservoir has been facing troubles, including silt accumulation, over a period. The dam committee that came from the Centre had given many recommendations. However, I feel that the recommendation were not taken seriously. Had that not happened, this situation would have not arisen," Mr. Bommai told pressperson here.

"There could be technical or financial problems. There were enough indications that the region would receive more than average rainfall. An investigation would reveal the truth," he added.

'Check safety of dams'

Union Minister for Heavy Industries and Steel H.D. Kumaraswamy has urged the government to ascertain the position of crest gates in all reservoirs across Karnataka. Terming it a big accident, he said: "The stoplog gates present at Narayanpur and Almatti reservoirs are not there in the Tungabhadra dam and the Krishnaraja Sagar, since that was not available during its construction. It should be built now. Farmers are in trouble and this is like playing with their lives."

Stating that the government cannot be held responsible, Mr. Kumaraswamy said that a technical committee that inspects reservoirs gives lackadaisical reports. "This is a result of that. Repairs are going to be challenging for the government. It should consult technical experts to rectify the problem."

Siddaramaiah to visit TB dam tomorrow

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah will visit the Tungabhadra reservoir at Munirabad in Koppal district on Tuesday. A note from the Chief Minister's Office said Mr. Siddaramaiah held a discussion and received information from senior officials of the Water Resources Department, including Principal Secretary Gaurav Gupta.

He has instructed the officials to take up precautionary work to prevent any losses, the note said, adding that he held discussions with Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar, Vijayanagara in-charge Minister B.Z. Zameer Ahmed Khan, and Koppal in-charge Minister Shivaraj Tangadagi.

Ropeway at waterfalls in the offing

The Hindu Bureau
MYSURU

In the future it may be possible to get an aerial view of the Gaganachukki and Bharachukki waterfalls as a ropeway connecting the two is in the pipeline. This will facilitate tourists to move from one waterfall to another to get a glimpse of both. The Gaganachukki and Bharachukki are separated by a few km and while the former is in Mandya, the latter is in Chamarajanagar district.

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Saturday referred to the project at Bharachukki and said that the project was under examination to determine whether it should be taken up by the government or executed under the PPP model.

Cardamom varieties developed by Kodagu-based regional station of IISR released by Modi in Delhi

The Hindu Bureau
MYSURU

Two varieties of cardamom developed by the regional station of the Indian Institute of Spices Research (IISR), Kozhikode, a constituent body of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), were among 109 climate-resilient crop varieties released by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Delhi on Sunday.

The ICAR-IISR regional station is at Appangala in Madikeri and is involved in the conservation, characterisation, and utilisation of cardamom genetic resources.

A release said it recently developed two varieties of cardamom which were named IISR Manushree and IISR Kaveri and having the characteristic feature of drought tolerance.

IISR Kaveri variety of cardamom that was developed by the regional station of IISR at Appangala in Madikeri taluk. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

The two varieties were developed by S.J. Anke Gowda, Principal Scientist and Head, ICAR-IISR, RS, Appangala, and his team, according to the release.

These two varieties recently received the required regulatory approval from the Central Sub-Committee on Crop Standards, Notification and Release of Varieties for Horticultural Crops.

The release said IISR Manushree was developed through clonal selection. "This variety is tolerant to moisture stress and produces an average yield of 550 kg of capsules per hectare (ha) under irrigated conditions," according to the release. But under moisture-stress conditions, the average yield is 360 kg per ha, the release added.

Underlining the salient features of the cardamom variety, the release said the essential oil content is 8.74% under irrigated conditions and 8.84% under moisture-stress conditions. "This variety is suitable for cultivation in the cardamom growing regions of Karnataka and Kerala," according to the release.

The scientists said IISR Kaveri is a compact flowering variety also developed through clonal selection and tolerant to moisture stress.

It produces an average yield of 482 kg capsules per ha under irrigated conditions, and 308 kg per ha under moisture-stress conditions.

"This has high essential oil content of 9.08% under irrigated conditions and 9.51% under moisture-stress conditions and this variety is suitable for cultivation in Karnataka," the release added.

Pointing out that soil moisture was a limiting factor in augmenting cardamom production, the release said recently many youngsters from non-traditional areas had evinced interest in cultivating cardamom but the crop experienced moisture stress during summer months. In such places, cardamom varieties with drought-tolerance capacity could be tried, said the release.

BJP 'disgruntled' leaders meet to discuss another padayatra

The Hindu Bureau
BELAGAVI

A meeting of some BJP leaders in Belagavi on Sunday led to speculation that those opposed to the leadership of B.Y. Vijayendra, State president, were discussing plans to unseat him. Speculation was rife that the disgruntled leaders were trying to flex their political muscles as more leaders joined them for the meeting on Sunday.

The leaders, however, maintained that they were discussing detailed plans for another padayatra from Kudalasangama to Ballari to protest against the alleged scam in Karnataka Maharshi Valmiki Scheduled Tribes Development Corporation Ltd.

Former Minister Arvind Limbavali told reporters that there was no other reason for the meeting and denied rumours that they were planning a rebellion against Mr. Vijayendra.

Former Minister Ramesh Jarkiholi also told reporters in the evening that he would take the lead in this proposed padayatra and added the dates will be finalised after consulting the party high command.

"The padayatra against the MUDA scam was confined to Mysuru. But our agitation will impact the whole State. This is not a protest rally to make someone a hero," Mr. Limbavali said. He said they were planning to invite some national party leaders.

When asked why he did not participate in the Mysuru padayatra, Mr. Limbavalli said he wanted to conserve energy for the Ballari padayatra.

Among those who attended the meeting were senior leader and former Union Minister Basanagouda Patil R. Yatnal, former Minister Kumar Bangarappa, former MPs Pratap Simha, G.M. Siddeshwar, and Annasaheb Jolle. All these leaders have issued statements against the party leadership in Karnataka at least once in public.

CORRIDORS OF POWER

Just publicity won't do

Lack of cleanliness at public places such as bus stands, footpaths, markets, railway stations, and playgrounds are some of the reasons for the spread of dengue, as rainwater becomes stagnant at many of these places. At bus stands, passengers waiting for overnight buses are found moving from one place to another, trying to escape mosquitoes.

For instance, passengers waiting for buses at Hospet in Vijayanagara district sought to know why the government spent huge amounts of money on publicity and advertisements without providing basic facilities at bus stations. Authorities of the Namma Metro in Bengaluru make frequent announcements to create awareness about dengue, but that does not seem to percolate down to the places such as bus stands far away from the State capital.

'Adjustment' politics

Former Minister K.S. Eshwarappa *(pictured)*, who was expelled from the BJP earlier this year, has once again accused the leaders of the BJP of engaging in "adjustment politics" with the Congress. On August 9, the BJP leader reiterated the allegation and referred to Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar's statement during the Janandolana rally countering the BJP's padayatra against the Congress government.

Mr. Shivakumar apparently hinted that BJP State unit chief B.Y. Vijayendra could win in Shikaripur in the 2023 Assembly polls largely owing to tacit understanding with the Congress. Mr. Eshwarappa contested as an Independent for the Shivamogga Lok Sabha seat in 2024 largely to fight against "dynastic and adjustment politics", the former BJP leader claimed.

Boycotting padayatra

A rare bonhomie and brotherhood were on display between BJP MLAs Basanagouda Patil R. Yatnal *(pictured)* and Ramesh Jarkiholi at Athani in Belagavi last week.

After participating in a car festival, they announced that they would boycott the combined Opposition BJP-JD(S) padayatra from Bengaluru to Mysuru against the alleged MUDA scam involving Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, for different reasons.

While Mr. Yatnal said he opposed the protest rally led by "tainted leaders" such as former Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa and his son and the party president B.Y. Vijayendra, Mr. Jarkiholi said he thought the alleged irregularities in Karnataka Maharshi Valmiki Scheduled Tribes Development Corporation Ltd. were more serious than the MUDA issue. Both announced that they will take out a separate padayatra from Kudalasangama to Ballari to create awareness about corruption in the Congress government and sought permission from the party high command.

Nagesh Prabhu
Sathish G.T.
Rishikesh Bahadur Desai

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SHORT TERM TENDER NOTIFICATION
(Through KPPP only)

1) No.KWB/TEC/CE(B)/CTD/AMRUT/432/2024-25 Dtd: 09.08.2024

Name of the work : "Improvements of water supply system to Hosadurga, Holalkere & Jaglur towns under AMRUT 2.0 including Operation & Maintenance for a period of 5 years (including 1 year DLP) through Design, Build, Operation and Transfer (DBOT) mode. (NO VARIATION)."

KUWSDB/2024-25/WS/WORK_INDENT235

2) No.KWB/TEC/CE(B)/SMG/AMRUT/433/2024-25 Dtd: 09.08.2024

Name of the work : "Providing water supply system to Hosanagara, Thrithahalli, Shikaripura, Kargal, Holehonnur and Anvatti under AMRUT 2.0 including Operation & Maintenance for a period of 5 years (including 1 year DLP) through Design, Build, Operation and Transfer (DBOT) mode."

KUWSDB/2024-25/WS/WORK_INDENT234

3) No.KWB/TEC/CE(B)/BNG/AMRUT-P-1/434/2024-25 Dt: 09.08.2024

Name of the work : "Providing Improvements of Water Supply System to Jigani, Anekal, Doddaballapura and Hoskote under AMRUT 2.0 including Operation and Maintenance for a period of 5 years (including 1 year DLP) through Design, Build, Operate and Transfer (DBOT) mode"

KUWSDB/2024-25/WS/WORK_INDENT236

4) No.KWB/TEC/CE(B)/BNG/AMRUT-P-2/435/2024-25 Dt: 09.08.2024

Name of the work : "Providing Improvements of Water Supply System to Magadi, Channapatna, Kankapura and Harohalli under AMRUT 2.0 including Operation and Maintenance for a period of 5 years (including 1 year DLP) through Design, Build, Operate and Transfer (DBOT) mode"

KUWSDB/2024-25/WS/WORK_INDENT237

For further details may be obtained through Karnataka Public Procurement Portal website **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in**

DIPR/CP/1392/AKAR/2024-25

Sd/- CHIEF ENGINEER (B), KUWS & D BOARD, Bengaluru

OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE

BIRTH CENTENARY

BIRTH CENTENARY

Shri K.S.T. PANI
DOB: 12-08-1924 - DOD: 09-11-2014
Chief General Manager (Retd)
State Bank of India
Former Managing Director,
State Bank of Travancore
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Children, Grandchildren,
Great Grandchildren
and Family Members.

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Sl No.	Division	IFT Number	Amount put to Tender / EMD Amount	Last date & time for Submission of Tender	Date & time for Opening of Tender
1.	South-West-2	BWSSB/EESW-2/TO/PB/969/2024-25 Dated: 07.08.2024	₹ 26,09,894/-	20.08.2024 upto 4:00 pm	21.08.2024 after 4:00 pm
			₹ 77,000/-		
2.			₹ 19,95,790/-		
			₹ 58,900/-		
3.			₹ 66,97561/-		
			₹ 1,58,100/-		

Sd/- Executive Engineer (South-West-2)

Office of the Chief Engineer (West), 6th Floor, Cauvery Bhavan, K.G. Road, Bengaluru - 560009

4.	West-1	BWSSB/EEW-1/PB/1659/2024-25 Dated: 07.08.2024 (2nd Call)	₹ 4,98,090/-	20.08.2024 upto 4:00 pm	21.08.2024 after 4:30 pm
			₹ 14,700/-		

Sd/- Executive Engineer (West-1)

Office of the Chief Engineer (North), 2nd Floor, Cauvery Bhavan, K.G. Road, Bengaluru - 560009

5.	North-1	BWSSB/ENTE/TO/AE-1/852/2024-25 Dated: 08.08.2024	₹ 6,64,336/-	26.08.2024 upto 3:00 pm	27.08.2024 after 4:00 pm
			₹ 19,600/-		

Sd/- Executive Engineer (North-1)

The detail regarding the tender & participation in the e-procurement portal process can be obtained by logging on to **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in** For further details contact the undersigned office during working hours.

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What is the Google 'monopoly' antitrust case and how does it affect consumers?

When a monopoly comes into existence, rivals are forced out and the company with the most power is able to abuse customers because they have very few other options. The U.S. Department of Justice sought to establish that Google had a monopoly in the web search and advertising sectors

John Xavier
Sahana Venugopal

The story so far:

On August 5, Google lost a major antitrust case brought against it by the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) that sought to establish that the tech giant had a monopoly in the web search and advertising sectors. The 10-week-long bench trial that took place in September 2023 saw high-profile tech leaders, including Google CEO Sundar Pichai and Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella, testifying before the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia. The lawsuit accused Google of using its dominant position in the search engine market to elbow out rivals and maintain monopoly. Its exclusive deals with handset makers were brought before the court as evidence. In the end, U.S. District Judge Amit Mehta ruled that Google was a monopolist.

What did the ruling state?

According to the ruling, Google's search dominance was majorly achieved through a strategy of exclusive distribution agreements, or default distribution. This refers to the way Google entered into lucrative contracts with "browser developers, mobile device manufacturers, and wireless carriers" so that it was the first or default search engine that users of such services or new phones were given. Google pays for this privilege and has shelled out more than $26 billion for it in 2021, per the court.

"After having carefully considered and weighed the witness testimony and evidence, the court reaches the following conclusion: Google is a monopolist, and it has acted as one to maintain its monopoly. It has violated Section 2 of the Sherman Act," the ruling noted, referencing a U.S. law that views business monopoly or attempts at monopolising as an offence. Per the court, Google used its monopoly power in two markets: general search services and general search text ads. "Importantly, the court also finds that Google has exercised its monopoly power by charging supra-competitive prices for general search text ads. That conduct has allowed Google to earn monopoly profits," reported the filing. Furthermore, the court harshly criticised the way Google failed to preserve employee correspondence that could have served as evidence.

However, some of the court's conclusions were in favour of the tech giant. It was determined that Google did not have monopoly power in the search advertising market. The court also noted there was no product market for general search advertising and that Google was not liable for actions involving its advertising platform.

In addition to this, Google will not be sanctioned for the way it failed to preserve employee chat messages, though the court warned it might not be so "lucky" in a future case. Interestingly, the judge observed that Google had brought out the "industry's highest quality search engine, which has earned Google the trust of hundreds of millions of daily users."

How do monopolistic practices harm consumer experience?

Regulators around the world monitor how businesses use technology in their countries, to prevent the concentration of power in the hands of a few entities. This ensures healthy competition in the market segment, so that all participants are striving to do better for their customers. When a monopoly comes into existence, however, rivals may be forced out of the market while the company with the most power is able to abuse customers because they have very few other options. Such companies also lose the incentive to keep improving the quality of their product.

The court ruling in the Google case even pointed to this as a risk factor.

"Google's indifference is unsurprising. In 2020, Google conducted a quality degradation study, which showed that it would not lose search revenue if it were to significantly reduce the quality of its search product," observed the filing, "the fact that Google makes product changes without concern that its users might go elsewhere is something only a firm with monopoly power could do."

What did the U.S. DOJ say?

The U.S. DOJ hailed the ruling as a public victory for internet users in the U.S.

"This victory against Google is an historic win for the American people," said Attorney General Merrick B. Garland in a statement on the DOJ website. "No company – no matter how large or influential – is above the law. The Justice Department will continue to vigorously enforce our antitrust laws."

Google is far from the only company in the regulator's line of vision.

The U.S. DOJ is also reportedly teaming up with the U.S. Federal Trade Commission (FTC) to act against other large tech players on antitrust grounds, including Microsoft, OpenAI, and Nvidia, as per *The New York Times*.

What happens next?

Google will be appealing the ruling. In the meantime, the court has asked both parties, Google and the Department of Justice, to find a remedy ahead of their meeting with Judge Mehta on September 9. The remedy, in this case, could range anywhere between breaking up Google to ordering the search giant to end its exclusive deals with mobile makers.

The former could fundamentally alter the dynamics of consumer digital business market as Google plays a key role by providing its platform to both individuals and businesses to interact. In the latter case, in terms of immediate effect, handset makers could lose billions of dollars they receive from Google to pre-load the company's search engine in the smartphone.

This hefty payment to smartphone makers, particularly Apple, disincentivises them from innovating a rival search engine. Apple, during the hearing, had said that it will continue to use Google as its default search engine. Apart from this lawsuit, the Justice Department is set to go against Google in another antitrust trial that deals with the internet company's ad technology.

THE DAILY QUIZ

Please send in your answers to dailyquiz@thehindu.co.in

On his 105th birth anniversary, a quiz on Vikram Sarabhai's life beyond ISRO

Vasudevan Mukunth

QUESTION 1
Name the national research institute Sarabhai founded in November 1947. In its first days, it operated out of his residence before eventually taking shape at the M.G. Science Institute in Ahmedabad.

QUESTION 2
In 1962, Sarabhai set up the Indian National Committee for Space Research (INCOSPAR), the body that later became ISRO. Which body oversaw space-related activities in India before INCOSPAR?

QUESTION 3
When Sarabhai was doing his PhD at the University of Cambridge, who was his doctoral adviser? Likewise, name the ISRO chairman whose doctoral adviser Sarabhai was.

QUESTION 4
In the mid-1970s, a French aerospace company transferred its Viking engine technology to India, where the Liquid Propulsion Systems Centre used it to build the famous _____ engine. Fill in the blank. Hint: It is based on Sarabhai's full name.

QUESTION 5
Sarabhai's siblings X and Y were instrumental in establishing the National Institute of Design in Ahmedabad, based on 'The India Report' on industrial design in 1958. Name X and Y.

Visual question:
What is the original name of this building and what is its connection to Sarabhai? LAKSMO (CC BY-SA 4.0)

Questions and Answers to the August 9 edition of the daily quiz: 1. The name of the highest civilian award in Bangladesh. **Ans: The Swadhinata Padak (Independence Day Award)**
2. This river flows through Bangladesh and is known as the Padma in the country. **Ans: The Ganges River (Padma)**
3. The name of the traditional craft of Bangladesh where artisans create beautiful designs on textiles using a resist-dyeing technique. **Ans: Nakshi Kantha**
4. The Bangladeshi festival that involves colourful boat races. **Ans: Nouka Baich**
5. The organisers of the "Concert for Bangladesh", on August 1, 1971, at Madison Square Garden in New York City. **Ans: George Harrison and Ravi Shankar**
6. The unique characteristic of the Grameen Bank's approach to lending, particularly in the context of its borrowers. **Ans: The majority of its borrowers are women**
Visual: The UNESCO World Heritage site in Bangladesh which is famous for its intricate terracotta Hindu temples from the medieval period. **Ans: The Historic Mosque City of Bagerhat**
Early Bird: Seema Das

KNOW YOUR ENGLISH

I was miffed that I was not invited to sing

Everybody in office seems disturbed. However, my colleagues are being very tight-lipped about it

S. Upendran

"You look happy! Does this mean that you've got your promotion?"
"I haven't heard anything about it."
"It's been more than a week. Hasn't your boss told you anything?"
"Nobody is talking. They're being very tight-lipped about the interviews."
"Tight-lipped? Does it mean they're angry about something?"
"That's one of the meanings of the word. When you look at someone tight-lipped, you look at the individual with your lips pressed together."
"Something that people do when they're angry – keep their lips pressed together."
"Exactly!"
"How about this example? There's no point talking to Aditya right now. He's only giving tight-lipped replies."
"Great example. 'Tight-lipped' can also be used to mean not saying anything. When an individual remains tight-lipped about some matter, he remains silent about it."
"He's unwilling to give any information about the matter."
"Exactly! The Minister has remained tight-lipped about the cause of the accident."
"Nobody really knows much about Naveen. He's always been tight lipped about his private life."
"Jai, on the other hand, is not tight-lipped at all."
"Tell me, does 'tight-lipped' and 'stiff upper lip' mean the same thing?"
"No, they don't! Someone who maintains a 'stiff upper lip', does not show or reveal his feelings."
"In other words, even when he is terribly upset, he keeps his cool."
"Exactly! A bad situation doesn't get the better of him."
"He is a very determined individual who doesn't show his emotions."
"Here's an example. I thought Revathi would start crying after having lost in the final. But she kept a stiff upper lip."
"The CEO maintained a stiff upper lip even when the union representatives threatened to go on an indefinite strike."
"No matter what they say or do, keep a stiff upper lip. Don't let them get a sense of what you're really interested in."
"Aren't you angry that your colleagues are being tight-lipped about your promotion? After all, isn't it..."
"Well, I was a bit miffed, initially."
"Miffed? What does that mean?"
"Miffed is mostly used in informal contexts to mean annoyed – especially about the way a person behaves – the way he treats you."
"In other words, the person is not nice to you."
"His behaviour may be rather annoying. When you're miffed about something, you're only slightly angry about it – not very angry. The children were miffed when the school decided to cancel their visit to the zoo."
upendrankye@gmail.com

Word of the day

Incinerate:
become reduced to ashes; cause to undergo combustion

Synonym: burn

Usage: *The paper incinerated quickly.*

Pronunciation: bit.ly/incineratepro

International Phonetic Alphabet: /ɪnˈsɪnəɹeɪt/

For feedback and suggestions for Text & Context, please write to **letters@thehindu.co.in** with the subject 'Text & Context'

Linking elephants in distant jungles with lives of people in bustling Bengaluru

On World Elephant Day, August 12, *The Hindu* talks to members of Bengaluru-based Friends of Elephants, whose members are connected by a deep love for the world's largest terrestrial animal

Preeti Zachariah
BENGALURU

Elephants, as majestic symbols of our natural heritage, serve as a powerful lens through which to understand the broader implications of environmental conservation," says Mathew George Sankaramangalam, one of the founding members of Friends of Elephants (FOE), a Bengaluru-based group that seeks to raise awareness among people about the world's largest land animal.

The organisation, which turned 10 this year, prides itself on its work introducing urban people to the idea that the health of distant forests directly influences their own well-being. "Who would have thought that the fate of elephants, roaming freely in distant jungles, could be intertwined with the lives of city dwellers in bustling Bengaluru?" says the Bengaluru-based business person.

Friends of Elephants which turned 10 this year, prides itself on its work introducing urban people to the idea that the health of distant forests directly influences their own well-being. K. MURALI KUMAR

The beginnings

It began over a casual meeting at Cubbon Park exactly a decade ago. Six people from diverse backgrounds – an elephant researcher, a business person, a veterinarian, a doctor, and two photographers – connected by their love for elephants decided they wanted to do their bit towards elephant conservation. George still recalls the brainstorming that took place during that first meeting. "Different people came with different ideas," he says. "We didn't have a complete picture at that point in time."

Slowly, the idea began to take shape. The team created a logo, opened social media accounts, and began organising open events focused on elephant awareness and conservation. At these events, which were held regularly every month at the Rangoli Metro Art Center at M.G. Road, numerous elephant experts, including scientists, photographers, researchers and officials, would address the public about issues related to conserving these animals whose lives are constantly threatened by human activities.

"We noticed that there was a lot of information and opinions available on elephants, but not all of it was (backed by) knowledge. Information is not the same as knowledge," says elephant scientist Surendra Varma, another founding member of the group. Varma, who worked at the Indian Institute of Science for several years, has always valued disseminating knowledge to a lay audience, so "we thought we should (use this forum to) introduce people to experts in this field."

Creating more friends

At first, the platform drew researchers and students, people who knew something about wildlife, elephants or conservation, adds George. Slowly, laypeople with no expert knowledge but eager to learn more also started making their way to these events. "Every 4th Sunday, all of us would religiously assemble in the metro auditorium, and it became a happening place about all things related to elephant conservation," he says.

According to him, they did not miss a single meeting until COVID-19, when they were forced to shift to an online format, which still continues to this day. "The event was locally sponsored, and many businesses went through a downturn post-COVID. "Our members felt that we should not stretch ourselves too much till we get a good number of sponsors again, so we continued online," says George. "But we are now in the process of reviving those physical monthly meetings."

Surendra Varma

Singer Chitra Iyer, who regularly attended those physical meetings, remembers how these events managed to attract audiences from all walks of life: "There were people who were curious...people who didn't know what was happening. They would come in and become so engrossed in what was happening that they would start coming regularly," she says. The location – a public space in the middle of the city that was open to all – also played a role in growing the movement since it drew people casually walking past into the audience, says Iyer, a passionate animal activist and the founder-trustee of Society for Elephant Welfare (SEW). "For me, it was a source of education, not just information. I really enjoyed going to those meetings," she says.

George recollects a rather eventful talk involving the biologist, journalist, and filmmaker Sangita Iyer, the founder of the Voice for Asian Elephants Society. Unbeknownst to the organising team, the Captive Elephant Owners Association of Kerala learnt that Iyer would be part of this event. "They wanted to counter her," he says. "During the question-and-answer session, it became a very heated discussion."

George, who had chaired that meeting, intervened and saved the situation from getting out of hand, thanks to his knowledge of colloquial Malayalam. "We gave an opportunity for everyone to air their views," he says. "These monthly meetings were not about gaining knowledge; they were also about interacting, understanding each other, and exchanging ideas."

Sangita Iyer, Canadian Documentary Maker, author and elephant activist addressing the Friends of Elephants meeting.

Fiends of Elephants during their field work.

In addition to hosting talks by experts, the group also conducted fieldwork to raise awareness about captive elephants, organised education programmes for children, encouraged participants to create short films on elephant welfare and facilitated collaboration between diverse stakeholders, including researchers, forest officials, farmers, filmmakers, captive elephant owners, and activists.

By empowering urban dwellers with knowledge and expertise, Friends of Elephants helped create a network of volunteers who could help larger elephant conservation goals, whether it was helping the forest department during an elephant census, looking into the welfare of captive elephants or managing a forest fire. "It helped create a very important wildlife support system," believes Varma.

Bridging a gap

These meetings have been helpful for another reason. "For me, as an official, connecting with people was important at these events since it helps us bridge the knowledge and perception gap," says Manoj Kumar, the Additional Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, Karnataka, and a regular at these meetings. He says people sitting in Bengaluru often have a skewed understanding of human-elephant conflict and do not understand the on-ground situation.

"They don't understand the plight of local people or the forest department staff," he says. For instance, in Coorg, where he once worked, human-elephant conflict often results in serious law and order situations with elephants being electrocuted or shot and forest staff being assaulted because of the immense loss faced by communities cultivating expensive crops there. "Perception-wise, there is a whole lot of difference between what people in the field are really facing and what people sitting in Bengaluru are understanding," he says. "When we interact with them (Bengalureans) directly, I think this gap can easily be bridged."

The road ahead

Friends of Elephants is striving to narrow this urban-rural gap, a goal which is extremely important from a policy perspective, says Varma. "Policies for remote areas are created in capital cities," he says. While people from the forest have a deeper understanding and interest in the issue, they don't necessarily have the ability to communicate this or understand how political ecology works within a city. "We have reached a stage when this can be done only by people who live in cities," says Varma, who, therefore, feels that empowering urban people with knowledge is the best way forward. "If we start neglecting the cities, we are going to lose many things...and we cannot afford to lose a blade of grass," he says.

The organisation plans to continue trying to help elephants and people who live in their proximity, restart their physical meetings, expand into other cities and bring more people into the core group. "Of the original members, we are only left with two founding members," says George. 'We want to pass this baton to the next set of people who can work behind the scenes, get this going, and take it to the next level."

'Entrepreneurial action has moved from Silicon Valley to Bengaluru'

'Family offices in the country manage funds worth over $100 billion and the new generation members of these family offices are not interested in investing in gold or real estate, but are keen on participating in entrepreneurial growth'

Mini Tejaswi
BENGALURU

The whole entrepreneurial action has truly moved from Silicon Valley to Bengaluru and this fact was evident in the city's action-packed start-up ecosystem, said B.V Naidu, Chairman, Karnataka Digital Economy Mission (KDEM), a body that functions as a knowledge bridge between the State government and the industry ecosystem to accelerate growth in IT, BT, and S&T sectors.

A file photo of a tech park in Bengaluru.

Bengaluru's start-up capabilities

"The whole entrepreneurial action has truly moved from Silicon Valley to Bengaluru and the city's start-up ecosystem was evident of this fact," he said while speaking at the curtain raiser of TiE Global Summit (TGS) BLR 2024, a four-day global entrepreneurship event to be held in Bengaluru between December 9 and 11, and in Mysuru on December 12.

Mr. Naidu also said the whole world was looking at Bengaluru's start-up capabilities and talent pool, and eastern geographies such as South Korea and Japan have been showing extreme keenness in collaborating with India.

''Karnataka is positioned well for economic growth with twin engines supporting it,'' he said, referring to the team work of Priyank Kharge, Minister for Information Technology & Biotechnology and RDPR, and M.B Patil, Minister for Large and Medium Industries. Family offices in the country managed funds worth over $100 billion and the new generation members of these family offices were not interested in investing in gold or real estate, but were keen on participating in entrepreneurial growth, observed Prashanth Prakash, Chairman of Karnataka Start-up Vision Group.

New agenda

"We lost our path in manufacturing, although we had companies like HMT decades ago. It is time to set a new agenda to promote manufacturing, develop talent for manufacturing and attract investments from these family offices,'' suggested Mr. Prakash.

Disruptive model

Later, responding to a query on job reservation for Kannadigas, Mr. Kharge said: "Any State government will prefer to give jobs to locals, it is only natural. We are now coming out with a disruptive model to make every Kannadiga an ultimate expert in the world in most skills, this will further enhance their employability."

He said he met up with 50 corporates on Thursday to discuss ideas and issues around skill building and also to identify what were the newer skillsets required to take the industry forward.

Mr. Kharge further said the government was planning special policies to promote circular economy and space technologies. TiE Global Summit 2024, to be held at the Bangalore International Exhibition Center, is expected to host over 25,000 delegates including over 5,000 start-ups, 750 investors, 300 corporates, 150 speakers, and 10,000 futurepreneurs from over 50 countries.

Catalyst for ideas

According to Madan Padaki, Chair of TGS24 and President of TiE Bangalore, the summit is more than just a gathering; it's a catalyst for ideas to meet opportunities, and to ignite possibilities that can shape the future of our societies.

Under the theme "Putting Entrepreneurship First", the summit was aimed at creating an inclusive entrepreneurial ecosystem, democratising opportunities and uniting the global entrepreneurial community, he added.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

The Hindu.

FIFTY YEARS AGO AUGUST 12, 1974

Scramble for Kerosene

Bangalore, Aug. 11. Citizens of Bangalore have got used to seeing long queues, mostly made up of women and children, waiting patiently for a meagre quota of two litres of kerosene.

The scene during the last few days has, however, gone through a quaint change with a "canny" approach to the problem -- empty cans and bottles are lined up to reserve places for the weary customers. The scrabble for kerosene starts at dawn when hand drawn carts appear on the streets. In a few minutes children litter the streets with empty cans like soldiers responding to a siren. Even before the first few in the queue are cleared, placards are hung up near the carts that sales will resume in the evening. On many occasions the carts do not turn up in the evening.

Minister Against Expansion of Bangalore City

Bangalore, Aug. 11: The Public Works Minister, Mr. H.M. Channabasappa, to-day urged the people of Bangalore to oppose any further expansion of the city. Further growth would only give rise to the stupendous problems faced by bigger cities like Bombay and Calcutta. He was presiding over the foundation laying ceremony of a Kalyan Mantap to be constructed by the Sri Eshwara Seva Mandali on the Sampige Road in Malleswaram. Sri Mallikarjuna Murugarajendra Maha Swamigal of Chitradurga laid the foundation.

CITYBEATS

Democracy deep dive

AUGUST 15
Join a discussion on the recently released book, *Poles Apart*, a riveting exploration of how military strategies have impacted democracy in India and Pakistan. Author Aditya Sondhi will be in conversation with journalist Aakar Patel. Together they will delve into the political dynamics that shape these nations.
At The Bookworm, Church Street, 5.30pm.

Mumbai monsoon vibes

ONGOING
SodaBottleOpenerWala introduces the 'Bombae Monsoon Express,' a tea-time experience capturing Mumbai's monsoon vibes. For ₹449 onwards, indulge in a chai thali with classics such as vada pav, bun maska, kanda bhajiya, and more. Available Monday to Friday, 4pm to 7pm.
At SodaBottleOpenerWala, Lavelle Road. Contact 70222 55299.

Attention, cinephiles

UNTIL AUGUST 18
The 14th Bengaluru International Short Film Festival (BISFF) has 3,212 submissions from 96 countries. The festival will screen as many as 284 films and highlights include new categories such as 'Queer Qorner' and workshops on filmmaking. Live screenings are from August 16-18 at various venues.
For more information, visit bisff.in.

Remembering Krumbiegel's legacy

The ongoing flower show at Lalbagh is a chance to look back at its history and how it came to be the city's landmark

Rashmi Gopal Rao

Come August and the city gears up for one of its most colourful events – the Lalbagh flower show. A biannual event that attracts thousands of visitors, the flower show is not only a feast for the eyes but a treat for the senses. Bengaluru will witness the 216th edition of the show from August 8 to 19, and the theme is an ode to Dr BR Ambedkar, father of the Indian Constitution.

An invaluable asset to the city, the Lalbagh Botanical Gardens is arguably Bengaluru's best lung space and goes back 200-odd years. With beautiful landscapes, flowers blooming all year around and thoughtfully planted trees, the gardens of Lalbagh have been meticulously planned to say the least. Credit goes to German horticulturalist and town planner, Gustav Hermann Krumbiegel, whose efforts gave Bengaluru its original moniker of the Garden City of India.

Monumental work
Having arrived in India at the age of 26, Krumbiegel, who was born in 1865, was the brain behind several gardens in India including countless tea gardens, coffee estates and gardens in educational institutions, hospitals, guest houses and military and railway offices.

"My great grandfather arrived in India at the request of Sayajirao Gaekwad III who was the Maharaja of Baroda," says Alyia Krumbiegel, great granddaughter of Gustav Krumbiegel, who is currently visiting Bengaluru. "He designed his way from North India to South India and was the architect of the Kamatibaug in present-day Vadodara as well as the estates of Ooty and several other palace gardens."

Sayajirao Gaekwad III met Krumbiegel on a visit to the Kew Gardens in the United Kingdom. Krumbiegel was in charge of the Kew Gardens then and impressed with his skills, the Maharaja invited him to India. "My great-grandmother joined him a year later and they were married in Bombay on the very day she landed. His children were all born in India," adds the 63-year-old.

Krumbiegel's work was soon noticed by Krishnaraja Wadiyar IV of Mysore who was a close associate of Sayajirao Gaekwad III. Wadiyar invited Krumbiegel to Mysore where he was appointed Superintendent of the Government Gardens in 1908. "His responsibilities included curating and maintaining public gardens such as Bangalore's Lalbagh and Cubbon Park, Mysore Curzon Park and the Mysore Maharaja's personal estates in Mysore and Ooty," says Alyia. Gustav also established the Horticulture School in Mysore State in 1912.

A pioneer and visionary
As the curator and architect of Lalbagh, Krumbiegel bought in extensive development which included the introduction of a variety of flowering plants, a fumigation system to treat incoming and outgoing plants, improved infrastructure such as wide paths, lamp posts and beautification in terms of landscaping, lawns and flower beds.

Green, green grass of home Preparations underway for the upcoming flower show at Lalbagh, the Krumbiegel family, Aliya Krumbiegel. MURALI KUMAR / SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Krumbiegel encouraged commercial floriculture and horticulture by introducing the concept of flower shows inspired by those in the United Kingdom, says Alyia. "He supported the large scale growth of flowers such as the hibiscus, rose, marigold, champak, petunia, chrysanthemum and dahlia."

During his tenure, the Lalbagh library became an invaluable resource housing periodicals, journals and reference material on economics and horticultural topics.

Alyia recalls stories of how the cakes baked by her great grandmother were relished by the workers in the garden and how her great grandfather and grandmother would cycle around the outskirts of Lalbagh every Sunday. "My mother, Jeanne would tell me how she used to wait till great grandfather was sitting on the low wall by the superintendent bungalow drinking his coffee when she would try and scare him. It must have been amazing to live in the beautiful gardens!"

The West Gate is closest to Alyia's heart. "It was once called Krumbiegel Gate and it is my favourite starting point. I stand there for a minute or so and soak in the ambience imagining my great grandfather walking through Lalbagh. We have to remember the four heavy weights – Mark Cubbon, Krumbiegel, H C Javaraya and M H Marigowda, who gave so much to the Lalbagh Botanical gardens."

Green crusader
True to the saying that the apple never falls far from the tree, Aliya who lives in Surrey in the United Kingdom, is an interior designer and has created several gardens for her clients, winning awards in the Sutton in Bloom and London in Bloom competitions.

A vocal supporter of protecting trees and lung spaces everywhere, including Bengaluru and Mysore, Aliya has been actively raising her voice against the proposal to convert Mysore's Brindavan gardens, also designed by Krumbiegel, into a Disneyland-style amusement park.

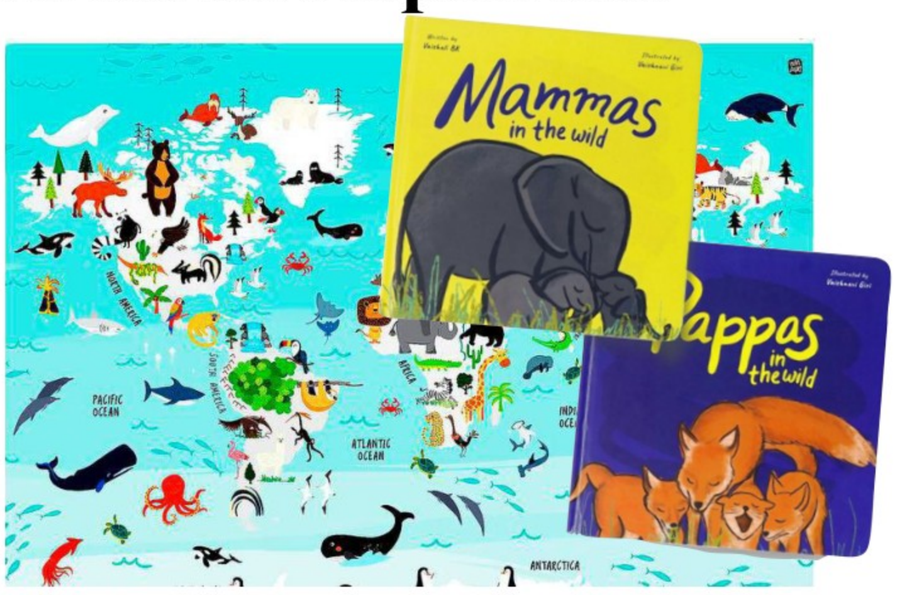
Admitting that life is different now compared to a century ago, Aliya says, people still need lung spaces in all forms – be it a terrace, park or even a balcony full of plants. "While my great grandfather was given the task of beautifying Bangalore, now the need is for more native trees. Indian trees have such a wide range of species, are easy to maintain and are more resilient to the vagaries of the climate. Preserving our ecological heritage is the only way forward. To plant a garden or lung space is to believe in tomorrow."

Aliya, who will be visiting the flower show hopes that there will be a theme dedicated to the four pillars of Lalbagh – Cubbon, Gustav, Javaraya and Marigowda as well as one that promotes sustainability sometime. "I also wish to see my three grandchildren walking in Lalbagh someday."

Vaishnavi Giri on how Nature and motherhood inspire her

Akila Kannadasan

Vaishnavi Giri has spent most part of her life surrounded by concrete jungles. But Nature is at the core of everything she does. The 36-year-old mother of two is the brain behind Wildpaper, that offers Nature-centric early learning products for children. She was in Coimbatore recently to participate in the Kovai Bookalatta Children's Literary Festival. At the event, Vaishnavi interacted with children through her stories, speaking about understanding wildlife and contributing to protecting it.



All creatures great and small Vaishnavi and her board books for children. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Vaishnavi was born and raised in Chennai, and is now settled in Bengaluru. She started Wildpaper in 2017 when she became a mother, and was looking for ways to bond with her son. "Parents are always on the lookout for tools that help them play meaningfully with their child," she says, adding that this is how her first card game Indian Wild Safari came about. The game, through which children can learn about animal sounds, remains among Wildpaper's best-sellers. Vaishnavi eventually created four other card games themed on space and the solar system, apart from non-tearable educational posters.

A graphic designer herself, Vaishnavi feels there is nothing Nature cannot teach. Her first boardbooks for children came out in 2020. *Mammas in the Wild* and *Pappas in the Wild* talk about parents in the animal kingdom. "I wanted to show children that there are so many kinds of mammas and pappas out there," she says. She has also written the picture book *Paro of the Sunderbans* for Karadi Tales, that is about the journey of Paro, a mudskipper who gets lost in the vast mangroves of the Sunderbans.

When in Chennai, Vaishnavi worked as a production designer with The Little Theatre; she has also worked in the Tamil film industry – she was the art assistant for films such as *Settai* and *Biriyani*. But after she moved cities and had children, everything changed. "Once I entered their world, I started looking at things from their perspective," she says. "I learnt so much from them; they make me want to be a better human being."

Everything that she does – be it writing or illustrating – has her children as the inspiration. Vaishnavi is now writing a Tamil book for children apart from illustrating another title for an independent publisher.

Smruti S and Sneha Sadhukhan

Ten-year old Gigi would have never guessed she would become a writer, despite enjoying speculative fiction and fantasy, such as the Harry Potter series. It was while she was in her early 20s, working as a feature journalist, that she realised she had found her groove.

"I used to write about books, food and music, and conduct interviews. The variety gave me so much freedom and such a range. That's when I realised that I loved writing," says Gigi who was in Bengaluru for a discussion on her second book *Biopeculiar: Stories of an Uncertain World* (Westland Books).

Eventually, Gigi realised that she favoured Irish authors, although their works usually fell under the category of British literature. She visited Ireland in 2018 and became fascinated with its culture. She decided to take up a master's in creative writing in Ireland, following which she published her first book, a novella, *One Arm Shorter Than The Other*, in 2022.

The book, Gigi says, gave her the confidence to pursue a career in writing. "I stayed back in Ireland, that is where I wrote *One Arm Shorter Than The Other*. Some of the ideas for this collection were conceptualised over there. Once the novella was published, I believed I could do this."

Uncharted terrain
Gigi Ganguly and her book Biopeculiar.
SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Exploring worlds unknown

Biopeculiar: Stories of an Uncertain World, is a collection of short stories themed around nature, but unconstrained by genre.

Gigi says, "I try to have the ending in mind before I start writing so I know this is the goal that I have to reach." While she sometimes gleans inspiration from other books, at times, she browses the net. "For instance, if I want to do a story on the wind, I'll just look it up and search for interesting words till an idea forms. At other times, the title comes to me first as it did with Seamlessly Sea, one of the short stories in *Biopeculiar.*"

More often than not, Gigi says she struggles with the body of her work because, "the middle part of a story should make sense and the motivations of every character should be explicit." She frowns on fiction that lacks well-defined character arcs. "For me, bad fiction is like a bad film where I don't understand a character's motivation or emotion. There should be a reason why a person follows a certain path; it should make sense."

As an animal lover, she tries to feature them in her work in some way or the other. In *Biopeculiar*, she has used anthropomorphism, a literary device that attributes human characteristics to non-human entities. Corvid Inspector, a protagonist in one of her short stories, is a detective bird that has been given all the traits of a human detective.

"Most detectives are troubled, they are depicted as battling an addiction or depression or have a tragic back story. I wanted that to reflect in Corvid Inspector as well."

Although she is a student of Arts and Geography, she has delved into scientific research to add context and depth to her work. Gigi believes she can never do justice to pure science fiction and speculative fiction is what she is comfortable with because it gives her the pace to experiment with magic realism and fantasy.

Environmentalists call for inclusion of ESAs in draft Coastal Zone Management Plan

The revised plan will affect how coastal areas used by fisherfolk are managed. CPRM conducted a GIS mapping of Puducherry's coastline to highlight the regions missed out by the plan

S. Prasad
PUDUCHERRY

Envrionmentalists say the map is not in tune with the amended CRZ notification of 2019. THE HINDU

Environmentalists have raised concerns over the lack of delineation of ecologically sensitive areas (ESA) in the draft Coastal Zone Management Plans (CZMP) published by the Puducherry Pollution Control Committee (PPCC) in April.

The revised CZMP will have an effect on how coastal areas used by fisherfolk are managed. The map in its present form is incomplete and not in tune with the amended Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) notification of 2019 since it had left out key land use spaces of fishermen, they contended.

The Coastal People's Right to Life Movement (CPRM), an organisation for coastal communities roped in ecologists, botanists and remote sensing researchers and recently conducted a GIS mapping of Puducherry's coastline including all ecologically sensitive areas to highlight the regions missed out by the PPCC. The report with the mapping of the ESAs was released by the CPRM on Saturday.

According to A.S. Arun Kumar, convenor of Puducherry unit of CPRM, "From February 2023, when the PPCC announced a public consultation on the draft CZMP, the fisher panchayats in Puducherry and Karaikal, Tamil Meenavar Viduthalai Vengaikal, Karaikal Fisher Women Federation and CPRM have been campaigning for the proper implementation of the CRZ Notification, 2019. The draft maps released by PPCC did not show even a single fishing village."

Ecologically sensitive

The CRZ notification has listed 11 ESAs under the category of CRZ-1A such as mangroves, corals and coral reefs, sand dunes, sand marshes, mudflats, sea grass beds and turtle nesting grounds. Mangroves play a major role and function as natural barriers to storm surges, cyclones and tsunamis, absorbing waves and wind energy mitigating their impact on coastal areas.

The National Centre for Sustainable Coastal Management (NCSCM) responsible for mapping the ESAs for Puducherry had marked only 82.64 acres of mangroves in Puducherry and Karaikal districts. An additional 228 acres of mangroves are missing in the draft CZMP excluding the buffer zone.

Similarly, with respect to sand dunes, the agency has marked only 45.78 acres in Puducherry district and said that there are no sand dunes in Karaikal. However, NCSCM has not marked about 355.19 acres of existing sand dunes in both the districts," according to a study conducted by CPRM.

"While all these places are to be identified and mapped with the support of the local people, the map in its current form, has not captured many of these aspects. Most importantly, it does not have space earmarked for the future development of the fisher community settlements," Arun Kumar said.

N. Malayalathan, the petitioner who filed the case to quash the current version of the map said, "The Coastal Zone Management Authority for Puducherry and Karaikal should play a proactive role and prevail upon the PPCC and NCSCM to mark the missing ESA and also prepare a conservation plan."

Stay vigilant: A.P. govt. to Kurnool residents

The Hindu Bureau
KURNOOL

The Andhra Pradesh State Disaster Management Authority (APSDMA) on Sunday cautioned people living along the banks of Krishna river to remain vigilant, following the washing away of a Tungabhadra dam gate in Karnataka.

The washing away of 19th gate of the reservoir has resulted in the gushing out of a significant volume of water from that gate. The incident occurred when the gates were being closed due to the receding flood level in the reservoir.

The current water level in the project stands above 100 tmcft. Engineers indicated that the restoration work could commence only after the discharge of 60 tmcft of water.

Currently, 33 gates were opened, releasing almost one lakh cusecs of water downstream.

This is the first major incident related to dam safety in the last 70 years. One lakh cusecs of water is at present flowing from the Tungabhadra to the Sunkesula project downstream.

The Tungabhadra River Board officials issued a warning to the people residing along the river basin to be alert.

Engineers advised the residents of Kurnool city, Kauthalam, Kosigi, Mantralayam, and Nandavaram mandals in the Kurnool district of Andhra Pradesh to be vigilant and not to cross the riverbed and canals adjoining it.

Water gushing through the broken crest gate in the Tungabhadra reservoir on Sunday. SRIDHAR KAVALI

The washing away of 19th gate of the reservoir has resulted in the gushing out of a significant volume of water from that gate

State Disaster Management (APSDM) said people in need of emergency assistance should contact toll-free numbers 1070, 112, and 18004250101. It also alerted the Police and Revenue authorities of the district to alert the villagers in the Krishna river catchment area.

'Prevent water wastage'

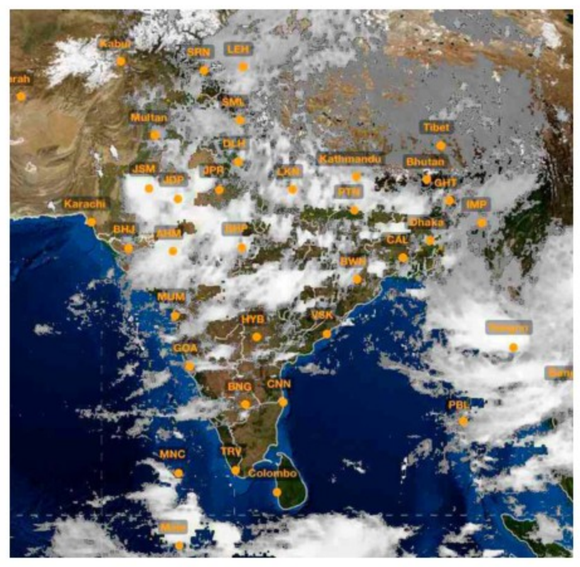
Finance Minister Payyavula Keshav underscored the urgency of restoring the Tungabhadra dam gate.

He said Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu was in contact with the Government of Karnataka, and directed measures to tackle the possible flooding along the catchment areas in Andhra Pradesh.

Mr. Keshav said the State government was focusing on resolving the matter and preventing further water wastage from the dam.

WEATHERWATCH

Rainfall, temperature & air quality in select metros yesterday



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 17.00 HRS)

Forecast for Monday: Heavy to very heavy rainfall very likely at isolated places over Rajasthan, Bihar, Assam and Meghalaya. Heavy rainfall at isolated places over Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh. Thunderstorm accompanied with lighting very likely at isolated places over Himachal Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh and West Bengal.

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	0.5	32.8	26.7	Kozhikode	—	32.0	25.4
Ahmedabad	5.0	31.0	25.7	Kurnool	24.0	34.0	24.7
Aizawl	2.0	29.4	23.8	Lucknow	0.9	32.8	26.2
Allahabad	12.0	33.5	26.4	Madurai	—	34.9	24.7
Bengaluru	0.5	30.5	21.4	Mangaluru	7.0	30.0	24.1
Bhopal	1.0	29.5	22.6	Mumbai	1.0	30.5	26.5
Bhubaneswar	—	33.5	24.0	Mysuru	5.0	29.8	—
Chandigarh	35.5	27.5	25.1	New Delhi	4.6	31.0	26.4
Chennai	—	35.4	26.5	Patna	42.0	32.6	25.6
Coimbatore	—	33.8	24.4	Port Blair	—	30.2	25.9
Dehradun	7.0	31.0	24.5	Puducherry	—	34.8	22.8
Gangtok	18.0	21.3	18.3	Pune	—	29.5	23.2
Goa	11.0	31.0	25.1	Raipur	—	30.8	24.3
Guwahati	0.3	33.2	27.0	Ranchi	7.0	29.8	23.5
Hubballi	—	29.0	23.0	Shillong	13.0	25.0	17.6
Hyderabad	—	31.4	23.5	Shimla	13.0	23.0	20.0
Imphal	1.2	28.5	22.7	Srinagar	—	26.8	22.2
Jaipur	4.6	28.3	26.1	Thiruvananthapuram	0.1	33.8	25.0
Kochi	0.4	29.8	25.4	Tiruchi	—	36.1	24.6
Kohima	2.0	24.6	17.9	Vijayawada	5.0	35.8	26.0
Kolkata	4.0	31.1	27.0	Visakhapatnam	—	35.0	27.8

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES	SO_2	NO_2	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	.34	..19	38	 58	79	.....
Bengaluru	.10	..26	26	 28	...129	.....
Chennai	...4	6	62	... 114	...104	.....
Delhi	.13	..22	61	 82	...112	.....
Hyderabad	.11	..11	19	 47	80	.....
Kolkata	...6	..20	28	 44	67	.....
Lucknow	.10	7	25	 36	62	.....
Mumbai	.95	..18	.—	 16	34	.....
Pune	.10	7	32	 37	64	.....
Visakhapatnam	...8	..45	54	 61	94	.....

Yesterday

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Byrnihat, Meghalaya recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 201 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Amravati, Maharashtra recorded a healthy AQI score of 20

Air Quality Code: Poor Moderate Good (Readings indicate average AQI)

SO_2: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.

NO_2: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

CO: Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death.

PM2.5 & PM10: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

A collaborative journey

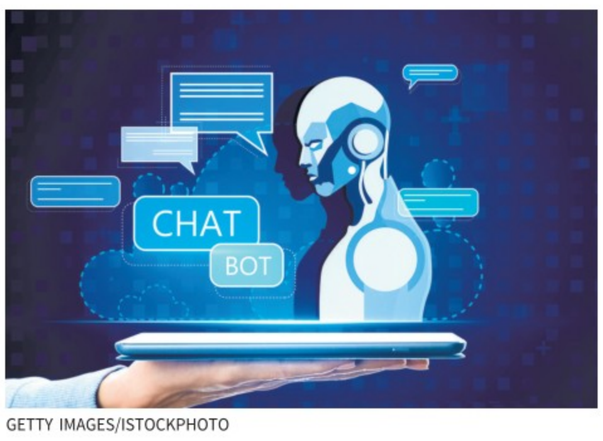
An educator on her experience of exploring ChatGPT along with her students

Sakshi Kathuria

"The best way to predict the future is to invent it."
Alan Kay

As an educator, I'm constantly looking for ways to improve my students' learning experience.

Recently, one particular conversation around ChatGPT, which was generating significant buzz, sparked my curiosity. While some viewed it with suspicion, a group of my students saw it as a potential game-changer. The discussion began casually during an office hour. A student hesitantly mentioned using ChatGPT to brainstorm ideas for an upcoming essay. Her initial apprehension stemmed from concerns about plagiarism and academic integrity. But, as she elaborated, it became clear that ChatGPT wasn't providing pre-written essays; it was helping her generate different perspectives and angles.



GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

Benefits

Intrigued, I decided to delve deeper. Over the next few classes, I opened the floor for a discussion. To my surprise, several students admitted to using ChatGPT for various tasks such as summarising complex research papers, formulating creative writing prompts, and even practising code for Computer Science students. As the conversation unfolded, some fascinating benefits emerged:

Enhanced Creativity: Several students highlighted how ChatGPT's ability to generate different text formats – poems, code, scripts – sparked their creativity and pushed them beyond their usual approaches, igniting new ideas and approaches.

Improved Research Skills: For some, ChatGPT served as a research assistant. By feeding in keywords, they could generate summaries of scholarly articles, saving valuable time and allowing them to focus on analysis and critical thinking.

Personalised Learning: A few students with learning disabilities found ChatGPT's ability to rephrase complex concepts particularly helpful. It allowed them to grasp information in a way that resonated with their learning styles.

Ethical concerns

While the potential of ChatGPT was undeniable, I also had concerns that I shared with my students:

Academic Integrity: The biggest concern was the misuse of ChatGPT for plagiarism. We discussed the importance of using the tool ethically, emphasising proper citation and ensuring their own understanding of the content.

Overdependence and Critical Thinking: A valid concern was students becoming overly reliant on ChatGPT for tasks that required critical thinking and analysis. We emphasised using the tool as a springboard, not a crutch.

Bias and Misinformation: The potential for bias within AI models was another point of discussion. We explored the importance of fact-checking and evaluating the information generated by ChatGPT.

Way ahead

Our exploration of ChatGPT was an eye-opening experience. It highlighted the potential of AI tools to personalise learning, enhance creativity, and empower students. However, it also underscored the importance of responsible use and critical thinking.

As educators, we must embrace AI not with fear, but with a spirit of exploration.

Open Discussions: Fostering open discussions about AI tools like ChatGPT allows students to explore their potential and limitations.

Ethical Guidelines: Developing clear ethical guidelines around the use of AI tools in the classroom promotes responsible use and academic integrity.

Curriculum Integration: Instead of viewing AI tools as separate entities, we can integrate them into the curriculum, teaching students how to use them effectively for research, analysis, and creative expression. The conversation around ChatGPT with my students was a valuable reminder that education is a collaborative journey. By embracing new technologies thoughtfully and ethically, we can create a learning environment that fosters curiosity, critical thinking, and a lifelong love of learning. As AI continues to evolve, it's our responsibility to ensure it empowers students.

After all, the future of learning isn't about AI replacing teachers; it's about AI and educators working together to create an engaging and enriching learning experience for all.

The author is a Faculty of Marketing and Marketing and Communications Chair at Fortune Institute of International Business (FIIB)

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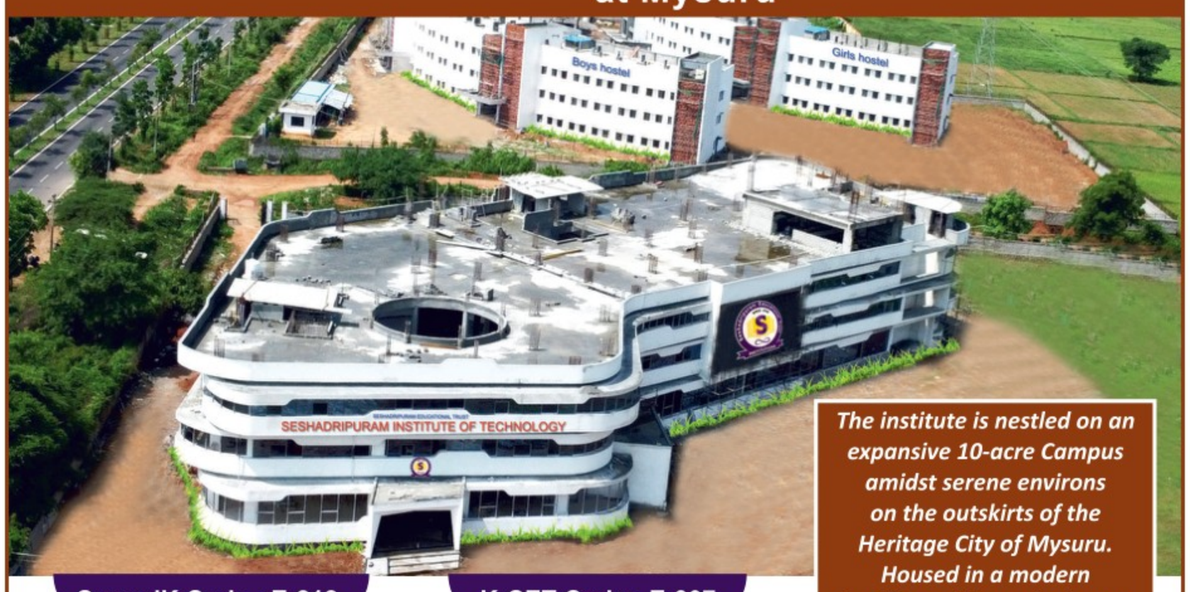

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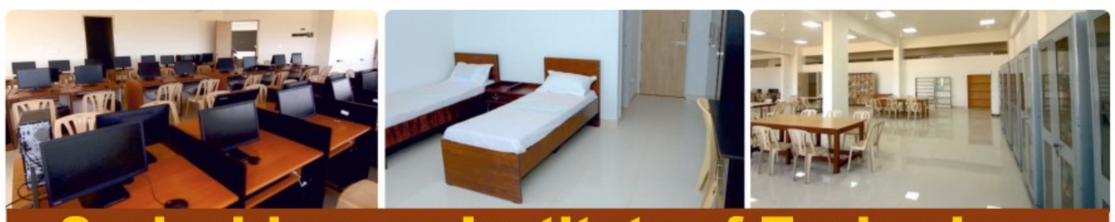

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Rule and exception

Courts should ensure free trial without prolonged imprisonment

The Supreme Court of India's order granting bail to Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia is a reminder to judges that they cannot deny bail as a form of punishment. It is also a reminder that the fundamentals of bail law are quite simple. Where a case turns mainly on documentary evidence, bail is the norm, and it is to be denied only if the suspect is a flight risk and is unlikely to appear before the court for trial, or is in a position to influence witnesses and tamper with evidence. The possibility of the trial not beginning anytime soon or that it may be a protracted one is also a circumstance warranting grant of bail. In times when Opposition political leaders are targeted and investigative agencies have no compunction about being seen as branches of the ruling party, the mere act of releasing a person on conditional bail after giving enough time for the completion of the investigation is seen as something extraordinary. In the Delhi liquor policy case, Mr. Sisodia was arrested by the CBI and then the Enforcement Directorate in early 2023. Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's turn came this year, but he managed to get interim bail in the ED's case concerning money-laundering charges, while he is still in custody in connection with the CBI's corruption case.

The order of Justices B.R. Gavai and K.V. Viswanathan has done more than pave the way for Mr. Sisodia's release after nearly a year-and-a-half in prison. It has foregrounded the principle that the rigours of a bail-denying law, the Prevention of Money Laundering Act in this case, need not stand in the way of a person's conditional release if there is a prolonged delay in the trial proceedings. It has also brought under focus the tendency among some judges to "play safe". The Bench has rightly highlighted the tendency among some judges to ignore the principle that bail is the rule, and not the exception. In Mr. Sisodia's case, based on the ED's assurance that the trial would be complete within six to eight months, the Court had allowed him to apply for bail again if the trial progresses too slowly or is protracted. This was on October 30, 2023. However, both the trial court and the Delhi High Court paid no heed to the Supreme Court's pointed reference to the need for speedy trial, but dismissed his application on merits and claimed that any delay in the commencement of the trial was attributable to the various petitions he has filed. Judges should guard against a likely loss of public trust in the judiciary's ability to protect the liberty of citizens and ensure fair trial without prolonged and needless pre-trial imprisonment.

Perfunctory panacea

Scientists need greater funding for research, not national awards

Later this month, 33 scientists will be awarded the Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar (RVP), the current government's revamped approach to independent India's long tradition of annually awarding scientists with promise. The rejig is in doing away with the Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar (SSB) awards, once awarded to scientists under 45 by the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR). It comprised a certificate, a cash prize and some additional monetary benefits. The RVP replaces it with a medal and a certificate and, renaming it the Vigyan Yuva-SSB. There are also other RVP awards – the Vigyan Shri, Vigyan Ratna and Vigyan Team awards. The latter will be for scientists over 45 who have made distinguished contributions in science and technology over their entire career as well, as for teams of scientists and technologists with exceptional contributions.

In theory the total number of awards, under all categories, is capped at 56, though those selected for this year are fewer than the ceiling. The team award has been conferred on the Indian Space Research Organisation's 'Chandrayaan-3 team', which certainly has over three members. These may well be technicalities and, being the first edition of the prizes, could be transitional. The list of awardees spans a wide range of fields from astrophysics to agriculture, and this is not unique to the RVP, the awardees are overwhelmingly from centrally funded and the most elite of India's scientific and research institutions such as the Indian Institutes of Technology, Indian Institutes of Science Education and Research, CSIR and atomic energy institutions. The RVP awards were instituted after the Ministry of Home Affairs and heads of science departments concluded in 2022 that there were too many awards being given out by individual scientific departments and that it was necessary to trim them and raise their 'stature' to national awards. While distinguished scientists have always received the Padma awards, just as those in other fields, the original schema for scientist-specific awards was to encourage them to stick to research, whose outcomes are not always immediately tangible and whose impact is not immediately assessed. Much like Olympic medals, Nobel Prizes continue to elude Indian scientists and this has been a touchy topic for many governments. The national awards are not a substitute or catalyst for the Nobels. The government should not assume that scientists only crave honour and recognition. Too many scientists in India labour with minimal funds, substandard equipment and a discouraging milieu, forcing them to compete at the cutting edge of research with their hands tied. Raising the budgetary allocation and making scientific research more rewarding in India will do greater service to science than tokenism.

Parties, serious crimes and the need for judicial clarity

P.D.T. Achary
Former Secretary General, Lok Sabha

Two recent observations from two different Benches of the Supreme Court of India in the bail petitions of Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and former Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia deserve in-depth analysis. The first was the observation from the Bench headed by Justice Sanjiv Khanna. The judge asked the government lawyer whether in a case under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) involving leaders of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), the party too is not involved. What is the role of the political party? Can it be made an accused party? These questions from the Bench prompted the Enforcement Directorate to make AAP too an accused party in Mr. Kejriwal's case. It is perhaps for the first time that a political party is being made as an accused under the PMLA. In a parliamentary democratic system, where political parties play a pivotal role in mobilising people on the basis of ideologies and political programmes and run a government, making them the accused in serious criminal cases is fraught with grave problems.

An analysis, in legal terms

Let us look at this issue academically and not present any argument in favour of or against a particular case. So, let us analyse it in terms of the relevant legal provisions. Newspaper reports show that the investigative agency invoked Section 70 of the PMLA to rope in the AAP. This section deals with offences by companies. The gist of this provision is that if the person committing a contravention of any of the provisions of the Act is a company, then every person who was in charge of the company shall be deemed to be guilty under the Act and shall be proceeded against and punished accordingly. In this section, there is an explanation which says that 'company means any body corporate and includes a firm or other association of individuals'. Where does a political party come in under this definition?

The investigative agency reportedly picked up the definition of political parties from The Representation of The People Act (RPA), 1951 and brought it under Section 70 of the PMLA. Section 29A of the RPA 1951 defines a political party as "any association or body of individual citizen of India calling itself a political party...." Under this definition, an association or individual citizen of India becomes a political party only when it calls itself a political party. So, all associations of individuals cannot be treated as political parties unless they call themselves a political party. But the explanation to Section 70 of the PMLA covers only associations of individuals and not associations which call themselves a political party. Thus, there is an obvious distinction between these two definitions. The conclusion, therefore, is that Section 70 of the PMLA does not cover political parties. Thus, it is not legally permissible to bring a political party within the definition in this clause.

In a parliamentary democratic system, making political parties the accused in serious criminal cases is a problem-fraught one

Further, under the above explanation, "other association of individuals" are preceded by the words "any body corporate and includes a firm"; applying the rule of interpretation of statutes, ejusdem generis (of the same kind), association of individuals can only mean a body in the nature of a body corporate or a firm. A political party is not in the nature of a body corporate or a firm. We may try to understand the context of this definition. The context is the generation of black money through certain illegal transactions and the laundering of it.

Political parties are not basically transactional bodies. Their job is to mobilise people, fight elections and run a government. Running a business, legal or otherwise, is not the domain of a political party. It is a matter of common knowledge that most political parties run their affairs with money donated by individuals or corporates. The law permits this but it does not concern itself with why such donations are made. Of course the law requires political parties to make a declaration to the Election Commission of India of all contributions received from individuals or companies other than government companies under Section 29C of the RP Act 1951. If a political party does not comply with this provision, it will not get any income-tax relief. It may be noted here that the entire donation received by a political party is exempted from income-tax. We can very well see that the law is mindful of the role played by the political parties in our democratic system, and is, therefore, considerate to them. So, it is a little difficult to understand the observation of the learned Bench about bringing political parties within the purview of the PMLA.

Policy and criminality

The second observation is from a Bench of Justice B.R. Gavai and Justice K.V. Viswanathan in a bail petition of Mr. Sisodia. The Bench, with its characteristic incisiveness, asked the lawyer of the Enforcement Directorate: Where do you draw the line between policy and criminality?" This is the most relevant question that comes up in a case arising out of a policy framed by a cabinet. The Constitution has adopted the British system of parliamentary democracy, with the cabinet form of government for the Union and the States. Under this system, the highest decision-making body is the cabinet headed by the Prime Minister at the Centre and Chief Ministers in the State. The cabinet of the Union or of a State has exclusive and final authority to frame a policy on any matter.

Ivor Jennings, the renowned authority on constitutional law, says, "in substance the cabinet is the directing body of the national policy", it may be a good policy or a bad one. In case a bad policy is made, it may be disapproved by Parliament or the Assembly, as the case may be. And, ultimately, the cabinet is accountable to the people. They can punish the government and the party which runs it if the policy is harmful to them. But under no circumstances does the judiciary examine the correctness or otherwise or the motive of a policy made by a cabinet. The Supreme Court has consistently taken this view. So, no criminality can be attributed to the cabinet for a policy made by it. Therefore, a criminal charge against an individual Minister for a decision taken by the cabinet is legally unsustainable and is unheard of in the history of the cabinet form of governments. Of course, a Minister as a public servant becomes culpable for an individual action which is in violation of law, but not as a part of the constitutional entity like the cabinet which has framed a policy. In the case above, the Bench is reported to have further observed that no cabinet can function if the Ministers are charged individually with criminality for a collective decision of the cabinet.

The judiciary must clarify

Bringing political parties within the purview of Prevention of Corruption Act and the Prevention of Money Laundering Act will have far-reaching consequences. In a country where political vendetta is almost an accepted method of dealing with political adversaries, such an action would make all political parties vulnerable. There is, therefore, an urgent need for the Supreme Court to clarify the law in this regard, and also about the culpability of individual Ministers for a cabinet decision.

A nutrition strategy would have averted Olympic agony

Kanika Agarwal
Faculty Fellow, Koita Centre for Digital Health, Trivedi School of Biosciences, Ashoka University

The high-stakes case, of the disqualification of Indian woman wrestler Vinesh Phogat from the women's 50kg wrestling final in the Paris Olympics 2024, was a setback for India. She was found to be 100 grams heavier than permissible limits. This incident highlights the role of support staff including the sports nutritionist, doctors, and the team management in the Indian contingent.

A myopic view indicates a slip, but the situation highlights the need to integrate precision nutrition in sport. Precision nutrition tailors dietary recommendations based on specific individual requirements, characteristics and circumstances. This process focuses on better understanding and meeting an athlete's individual requirements, particularly their individual response to different food/supplement intakes and avoiding a one-size-fits-all approach.

The science

Precision nutrition involves understanding an individual's metabolism, microbiome, and how their body responds to food and calorie expenditure to determine the best dietary practices for them. It focuses on systems biology and a multi-omics approach (including genomics, proteomics, metabolomics, microbiomes, and epigenetics), integrated with bioinformatics and machine learning to provide evidence-based individualised nutrition recommendations. This data-driven approach allows for adjustments based on an athlete's physiological responses, ensuring they are in peak condition for a competition. The integration with bioinformatics and machine learning will help in the identification of patterns and predict how different nutritional strategies affect an athlete's performance. The gut microflora may be influenced by diet, especially a plant-based diet and regular exercise, resulting in the production of short chain fatty acids which may support athletic performance and post-exercise metabolic recovery.

An effective nutrition recommendation rides on high granularity of an individual's dietary intake and physical activity data. Traditional questionnaire/interview-based methods of collecting such data have drawbacks such as self-reporting, memory bias, high respondent burden, and socially desirable responses. Combining this subjective information with targeted individual continuous monitoring (for example, continuous blood glucose monitoring) can provide more specific and individualised recommendations for athletes that not only address dietary requirements but also check the regulatory requirements of sport. Many wearable sensors track and provide information on physical activity levels, stress, sleep quality, and heart rate monitoring. This incident with Ms. Phogat underscores the importance of continuous and real-time tracking of targeted outcomes for athletes during training sessions, making it easier to achieve and maintain target weight.

The Vinesh Phogat case highlights the need for integrating precision nutrition with sportsperson training in India

Glucose monitoring

Continuous glucose monitors (CGM) are commonly used by people with diabetes to monitor interstitial blood glucose responses to food. These devices, implanted in the subcutaneous layer (just under the skin), record blood glucose levels minute by minute. The use of CGMs, under the supervision of a trained nutritionist, can help monitor athletes' blood glucose responses to food. The information collected can be used to individualise recommendations for building muscle, boosting energy, reducing inflammation, and maintaining body weight – important parameters for an athlete.

A few players have reportedly improved their sports performance using CGM. Retired Olympic gold medal-winning Australian swimmer Chelsea Hodges, once admitted that CGM helped manage her fuel levels and exhaustion during training sessions. Long-distance runner Eliud Kipchoge of Kenya has been using the CGM since 2021 to build personalised nutrition plans that give him a competitive advantage. The Union Cycliste Internationale (the world governing body of cycling and recognised by the International Olympic Committee) has banned the use of CGM by healthy athletes during competitions. However, these could potentially be used during training sessions to see how players respond to food. This use of technology for personalised nutrition recommendation is still in its early stages and requires further exploration.

The need for such personalised approaches becomes more apparent in weight-based sports, where "making weight" is crucial. Athletes in weight-based sports, such as boxing, wrestling, and martial arts, often struggle to stay within their designated weight class. To do so, they resort to extreme measures such as starvation, intentional dehydration, and using saunas or sweat suits to reduce weight quickly before weigh-ins. These drastic measures jeopardise their mental and physical health and adversely impact their performance. Reports indicate that Ms. Phogat spent an entire night trying to shed extra weight. Likewise, another Indian woman wrestler, Antim Panghal, reportedly starved herself for two days to make weight. Such instances would severely impact the capabilities of such sportspersons in such high-level competitions.

A role for sports nutritionists

A study found that coaches and fellow players play an influential role in deciding what dietary regimen works best for the athlete during training and competition. Athletes need sports nutritionists trained in precision nutrition to monitor their nutritional requirements, intake, and understand their body composition and metabolism.

It would be in everyone's best interest if nutritionists are assigned to different types of sports and become involved with the athletes longer, allowing their recommendations and body responses to be tracked and tested over time. These nutritionists must familiarise themselves with the rules of the sports, weight categories, weigh-in procedures, and methods to reduce weight without compromising an athlete's performance and annual training cycles.

Integrating precision nutrition into sports involves not only individualising dietary plans but also continuously monitoring and adjusting them based on the athlete's changing needs. This approach can help prevent the drastic measures often resorted to by athletes, in turn promoting healthier, and more sustainable practices.

In conclusion, the disqualification of Ms. Phogat underscores that there is a critical gap in the Indian sports support system. Precision nutrition, a data-driven approach to dietary planning, is imperative to prevent such setbacks and optimise athlete performance. By integrating technology and expert nutritionists, India can revolutionise its sports training, ensuring that sportspersons reach their full potential while prioritising their health and their well-being.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Hindenburg allegations

If proved right, the allegations by Hindenburg Research against the Chairperson of India's stock market regulator 'for having stakes in an obscure offshore entity' (Page 1, August 11) will further undermine the already deteriorating trust that a common man has in the government and financial dealings. We are fed up with the collusion that those in power have with businessmen. There needs to be a fair investigation.

Rohith Varon S.S.,
Chennai

There's no smoke without fire or where there's smoke there's fire. The judiciary needs to step in and order an inquiry. Is there truth in the allegations? Is there some conspiracy to target India? Or will Hindenburg Research continue to come up with more exposés?

K.V. Ramesh Nair,
Chennai

K. Natwar Singh

Diplomat-turned politician K. Natwar Singh wore many hats in his illustrious career (Inside pages, August 11). He also won his spurs as a writer and a chronicler, and his books turned out to be bestsellers. He was a political analyst and commentator par excellence.

C.V. Aravind,
Bengaluru

The country has lost not just an astute politician but also an exceptional orator and writer whose influence extended far beyond the political arena. His political career, marked by numerous ups and downs, reflected his resilience. What set him apart was his ability to infuse enthusiasm and inspiration into his writings. I have had the privilege of reading many of his columns and his words have always stayed with me. His autobiography, *One Life Is Not Enough*, is a particularly compelling read. His other literary works were equally sought after.

Lalgudi Muralidharan,
Lalgudi, Tamil Nadu

The Left's centrist conundrum

Vanya Vaidehi Bhargav

intellectual historian of modern India, and the author of the recently published book, *'Being Hindu, Being Indian: Lala Lajpat Rai's Ideas of Nationhood'*

The term 'centrist' has recently emerged to refer to a politics that is neither formally right-wing nor left-wing. Levelled by some self-identifying leftists in debates on social media platforms, the label is intentionally derogatory and scornful. At best, it signifies the morally dubious and cowardly politics of 'liberals' in the face of right-wing assaults on democracy, equality, freedom, truth, justice, and social progress. At worst, centrism is seen as tacitly complicit in these assaults, even as their prime enabler. Therefore, despite opposing the right-wing, these left-leaning individuals often spend more time denouncing centrists, who they view as equal or even greater adversaries.

Some individuals who self-identify as neither right- nor left-wing indeed exhibit a morally dubious 'centrism'. To appear objective and nonpartisan, they indulge in an all-sides-pleasing tightrope. Consequently, they make forced and false moral equivalences, give equal weight to illiberal, anti-democratic, and anti-constitutional voices and liberal-democratic and constitutional ones, and display amoral neutrality in situations demanding clear moral-political judgment. Such moral flimsiness cedes ground to illiberal, exclusionary, anti-constitutional ideological-political forces.

A second type of 'centrism' is more sinister, using the name of liberal moderation but readily sacrificing values of democracy, equality, pluralism, justice, truth, and liberty. This colludes with illiberal, inequality-promoting, exclusionary, authoritarian, and anti-constitutional forces.

However, some leftists on social media pejoratively use the term 'centrist' to criticise a third type of politics: one embodied by individuals who grasp the need to avoid extremes to build coalitions, which they recognise are essential to defeat their primary ideological adversary and realise their constitutionally-driven ideological vision. A firm commitment to constitutional morality and political realism leads such individuals to reject ideological purism and sectarianism. Their deliberate renunciation of purity and absolute truth is an adoption of a prudent, sensible path to realise their constitutionally guided ideological vision, to which they remain committed.

A commitment to politico-moral ideals makes these 'centrists' reject purism. They know that while idealism is often crucial to inspire all progress, utopian purism has reduced an ideological and political group to a radical but politically irrelevant sect. And that self-defeating sectarianism thwarts the alliance-building necessary to defeat the gravest threats to one's ideological-moral visions.

Moral purity is relatively easy when not seeking power. Choosing not to seek political power is often viewed as a moral virtue, indicating disinterest in corrupting power. However, political realism demands recognising that political power is vital for moral positions to have efficacy. Nothing made this more evident than the helplessness of liberals and the left over the last decade. Their moral outcries against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, the building of a Ram temple atop a destroyed mosque, the vilification of Muslims, and other aspects of the unfolding Hindutva revolution, had little effect without power backing them. Power is crucial to enforce moral visions. And, gaining power requires identifying allies, building coalitions, making limited compromises, and rejecting ideological purism.

In the past decade, some leftist individuals criticised the Congress as centrist. Some aspects of the party's history legitimatise this criticism. But the Congress has also successfully represented – as Yogendra Yadav once said – a 'centrist coalition of social groups, classes, and regions', which 'accommodates conflicting visions of India without giving into any extreme', and 'stands for a non-majoritarian way of creating electoral majority'. If the Congress's intermittent adoption of a problematic 'centrism' enabled anti-constitutional forces, as some argue, its championing of another, principled centrism paradoxically kept supremacist Hindutva nationalism at bay until the 1980s. The success was demonstrated by Hindu Mahasabha leaders admitting that 'the entire Hindu population is with Gandhi*ji* and his movement'. The Jana Sangh and the BJP's national vote share of roughly 3%-11% till 1989 similarly highlight the 'centrist' Congress's success at keeping Hindutva ethno-nationalism at bay. The Congress's 19.3% national vote share, even at its lowest nadir in 2014, means it remains the primary political force capable of challenging Hindutva supremacism nationally. Meanwhile, even when the CPI was more politically influential, during 1951-89, its vote share hovered between 2.5% and 9.94%. Since 1999, the CPI has steadily declined, ending with 0.49% of the national vote and two Lok Sabha seats in 2024.

The Hindutva ideological project has been actualised via state power. While people's power is highly significant in a democracy, state power is indispensable to ensuring that the polity remains a humane constitutional democracy and does not turn to inhumane unconstitutional authoritarianism.

Given the electoral irrelevance and political inefficacy of the left, I imagine that to halt the Hindutva juggernaut, many left-leaning Indians were compelled to rely on, in the 2024 elections, the same 'centrist' force they frequently castigated. This awkward reliance begs serious questions: will such individuals re-evaluate their ideological purism and their uncharitable judgments of others who are less purist? Might renouncing such self-defeating purism open a path to a less sectarian, and more ally-friendly, nuanced, innovative, and politically effective left-wing progressivism in India?

Political realism demands recognising that political power is vital for moral positions to have efficacy. Nothing made this more evident than the helplessness of liberals and the left over the last decade

Data on quota is a Pandora's box

Debate over reservation shows ongoing issues with data transparency in T.N.

STATE OF PLAY

T. Ramakrishnan
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Politics over reservation in education and public employment is nothing new to Tamil Nadu. The State is one of the early movers with regard to the quota, having introduced it over 100 years ago. But, the absence of quantifiable data on community-wise representation under Backward Classes (BC) and Most Backward Classes (MBC)-Denotified Communities (DNC) categories has been a subject matter of debate since the quantum of reservation was hiked to 50% in 1980. In the State, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes have 18% and 1% reservations, respectively. The overall 69% quota was, through a 1994 Act, protected under the Ninth Schedule of the Constitution.

The question over the data has been addressed partially through the publication of the State Backward Classes, Most Backward Classes and Minorities Welfare Department's reply to a query under the RTI on the representation of Vanniyars and the rest within the exclusive 20% quota for MBC-DNCs over the last 10-odd years. The query, made in 2023, got a reply on July 31. The timing of the reply was significant, as the Pattali Makkal Katchi (PMK), a chief advocate for the 10.5% separate reservation for the Vanniyars, had been pressing the government to issue an interim report on the issue, in view of reports that the State Backward Classes Commission had sought a one-year extension to make a recommendation on the internal reservation for the Vanniyars within the MBC-DNCs' share.

It all began with the previous AIADMK regime, which, on the eve of the announcement of the Assembly election schedule in February 2021, got a reservation law passed by the House and cleared by the then Governor.

Citing "extreme backwardness" of Vanniyars (who, in turn, encompass seven subcastes – Vanniyar, Vanniya, Vannia Gounder, Gounder or Kander, Padayachi, Palli and Agnikula Kshatriya), the Special Reservation Act of 2021 had assigned 10.5% to this community, apart from 7% for 25 MBCs and 68 DNCs, and 2.5% for the remaining 22 MBCs. The law was first quashed by the Madurai Bench in Madras High Court in November 2021, and the Supreme Court upheld the decision in March 2022. In its judgment, the court saw "no substantial basis" for classifying Vanniyars into one distinct group for internal reservation. Now, only the BC Muslims have been given a 3.5% reservation under the BC quota.

Since then, the PMK and other pro-Vanniyar activists have been demanding the restoration of the 10.5%. On July 24, PMK founder S. Ramadoss demanded an interim report on the work done by the State government and the Backward Classes Commission in 18 months. The RTI query revealed that Vanniyars were well ahead of the rest of the MBCs and DNCs in terms of representation in higher education and public employment. For example, with respect to admission to the MBBS, 5,938 candidates belonging to the MBC-DNCs were selected during 2018-22, both under the 20% exclusive reservation and open competition. Of them, Vanniyars accounted for 3,354. Likewise, of the 893 MBC-DNC candidates who qualified in the examination held by the Teachers Recruitment Board in 2021 for post-graduate assistants in government schools, 533 were from the community.

But, PMK president Anbumani Ramadoss dismissed the data as "incorrect" and demanded that the government release a White Paper on the representation of all communities within the MBC-DNCs in education and jobs since 1989. While the data sought to show that the Vanniyars' share within the 20% quota was above 10.5%, the PMK leader, relying on the data sourced by his party, contended that the share of Vanniyars in directly recruited Group I posts was much lower than 10.5%. The ruling DMK and the PMK differ on one other issue too. During the recently-held Assembly session, on June 26, the House adopted a resolution, proposed by the CM, urging the Centre to conduct a caste-based Census along with the general Census. However, the PMK argues that the State government itself can hold a socio-economic survey.

The episode has underscored the need for making public, at the earliest, the data on the break-up of caste-wise and Group-I-wise representation of all communities in education and employment under the 69% quota scheme and all the government's replies under the RTI Act, just as the Ministry of External Affairs has been doing for years.

As the world warms, more ACs are sold, heating up the globe further

China and India will have the highest number of AC units, more than 45% of the total units available globally

DATA POINT

Hannah Ritchie

An average consumer in India tends to buy the least efficient air conditioner in the market, a recent analysis by the International Energy Agency (IEA) shows. While this pattern of behaviour is similar to the other five countries and regions – Australia, the U.S., China, Japan, and Europe – the range of efficiency in AC units available in India is not as wide as in other markets.

The IEA estimates that globally, people buy AC units that are half as efficient as what is available in stores. As **Chart 1** shows, the dark line or the AC unit purchased by the average consumer lies on the extreme left end in the range of AC units available in the market.

One significant barrier to buying efficient AC units is the cost involved. While they are cheaper to run in the longer run, the high upfront cost deters consumers from buying them. According to an analysis by Our World In Data, in India, the cheapest AC unit with a 3-star efficiency rating costs around ₹29,000 while the cheapest variant with a 5-star rating costs about ₹36,000. This premium on the upfront cost makes households opt for the less efficient option.

The efficiency of air conditioning units becomes significant because their numbers are set to triple by 2050. The IEA estimates that there are two billion AC units in the world and according to its projections, this figure is set to rise to over 5.5 billion by 2050. As **Chart 2** shows, by 2050, China and India will have the highest number of AC units, more than 45% of the total units available globally.

One reason for high demand is climate change. As the world warms, more people will be exposed to heat waves, and those who already live in hot climates will experience more intense ones.

The other reason is the rise in incomes. In extremely hot countries, like India or Indonesia, if people can afford an AC, they will buy it. The higher the demand for AC units, the more electricity it would require. According to the IEA estimates, "space cooling," consumed around 2,100 terawatt-hours (TWh) of power in 2022. Global electricity use in 2022 was around 29,000 TWh. That means AC uses around seven per cent of the world's electricity.

Chart 3 shows the growth in electricity demand for ACs since 2000. Electricity demand for air conditioning has more than doubled in 22 years. This is also in line with growth rates in total electricity use, which increased by 90% between 2000 and 2022. Some of the electricity AC units use comes from fossil fuels, making them one of the drivers of carbon emissions. According to the IEA estimates, space cooling caused around one billion tonnes of CO_2 from electricity use in 2022. This amounts to 2.7% of total CO_2 emissions from fossil fuels and industry. But, this doesn't take into account the climate impact of refrigerants used in AC units

The AC unit's (cooling) contribution to global emissions is much lower than emissions from heating such as space and water heating. **Chart 4** shows the global carbon emissions from heating and cooling over time.

If the release of greenhouse gases from refrigerants is taken into account, it adds another 720 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalents (CO_2 eq) to the annual carbon footprint of air conditioners. This takes the greenhouse gas emissions from ACs to 3.2% of all greenhouse gas emissions in 2022. Despite the electricity usage and emissions, research shows that air conditioning makes extreme heat tolerable. The 2021 *Lancet* Countdown report estimated that air conditioning prevented almost 200,000 premature deaths in 2019.

Conditioning rising emissions

The charts were sourced from Our World In Data(OWID). Hannah Ritchie is deputy editor and science outreach lead at OWID

Chart 1: Chart shows the average consumer's air conditioner purchase trends and energy efficiency ratings

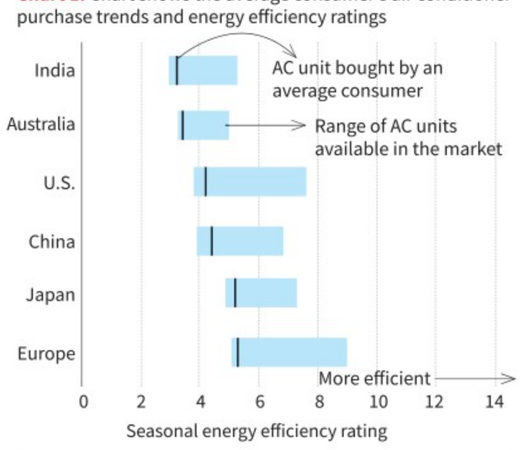


Chart 2: Chart shows the projected number of air conditioning units (in billion)

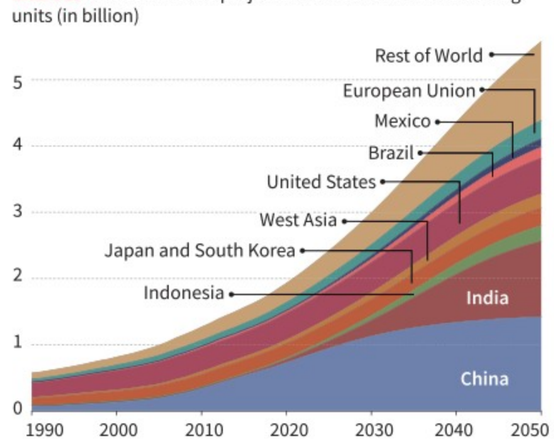


Chart 3: Chart shows the global electricity use for air conditioning in terawatt-hours (TWh)

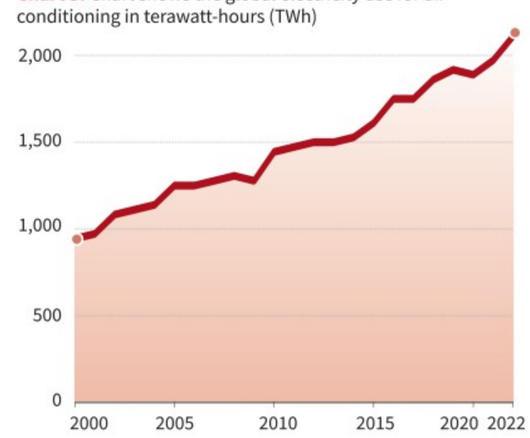
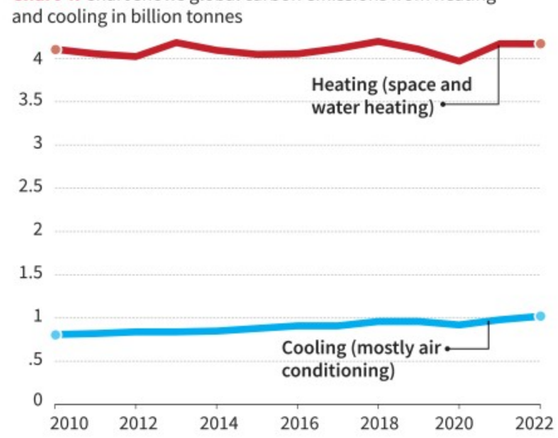


Chart 4: Chart shows global carbon emissions from heating and cooling in billion tonnes



FROM THE ARCHIVES
The Hindu.

FIFTY YEARS AGO AUGUST 12, 1974

Food imports to maintain public distribution system

New Delhi, August 11: The total quantity of foodgrains imported, including wheat received on loan from the Soviet Union during the 18 months from January 1973 to June 1974 was 6 million tonnes. These imports were made from Argentina, Australia, Canada, the U. S. and Russia.

Besides this, about 1.95 million tonnes of foodgrains (comprising 1.152 million tonnes of wheat and 4.3 lakh tonnes of milo) were purchased in April this year and this is expected to be received during the next few months. There are clear indications that the Government wants to go in for more imports to maintain the public distribution system, as the internal procurement of wheat has failed miserably. The total procurement of wheat in the current season has not touched two million tonnes and the earlier hopes of a pick-up in market arrivals following the rains have not materialised.

In addition to the import of 1.95 million tonnes contracted last April, the Government is reported to be closely watching the availability and price of wheat in international markets. It is stated that supplies will present no problem now as the total world production of wheat this year, excluding that of China, is expected to beat the previous record of 341 million tonnes in 1973.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO AUGUST 12, 1924

Rendition of the Berars.

Amritsar, August 11: Sheikh Sadiq Hassan, Barrister and Member of the Legislative Assembly, who has gone to Europe writes from London that he had an opportunity of seeing Lord Olivier, Secretary of State for India. In the course of his interviews the former impressed upon the latter the absolute necessity of a Round Table Conference with a view to establish Home Rule in India. He also spoke in favour of enforcing prohibition in India and asked for the appointment of a Commission to settle the claim of Nizam of Hyderabad for the restoration of Berar. In the course of his last plea, he referred to the assistance rendered by the Nizam in time of need to the British Government, Shiekh Sadiq Hassan is now proceeding to America where he will study the prohibition question as it works there.

From Page One

Hindenburg report raises political storm

Even as Ms. Buch and her husband have denied "the baseless allegations and insinuations made in the report", Mr. Gandhi, in a videographed statement, termed the revelations against her "explosive", wondering why she had not yet resigned. "New allegations have emerged, is the Supreme Court going to look at this matter *suo motu* again?" he asked.

The Adani Group has described the report as "a recycling of discredited claims that have been thoroughly investigated, proven to be baseless and already dismissed by the Hon'ble Supreme Court in January 2024".

The U.S.-based short seller on Saturday had said that the chief of India's stock market regulator, in charge of probing allegations against the Adani group of companies, herself had a stake in offshore entities linked to what it claimed was "the Adani money siphoning scandal".

Mr. Gandhi on Sunday said there was a significant risk in the Indian stock market as the governing institution was "compromised". "A serious allegation against the Adani Group was illegal share ownership and price manipulation using offshore funds. It has now emerged that SEBI Chairperson Madhabi Buch and her husband had an interest in one of those funds... the savings of millions of Indians are at risk. It is, therefore, imperative that this matter is investigated," he said.

Earlier, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge said the small and medium investors in the stock market needed to be protected, demanding a JPC inquiry. "Until then, concerns persist that PM Modi will continue to shield his ally, compromising India's Constitutional institutions, painstakingly built over seven decades," he said via a post on X.

CPI(M) leader Sitaram Yechury also sought a JPC probe, while D. Raja of the Communist Party of India accused the BJP of serving only corporate interests to the extent of protecting the "corrupt practices of their favoured corporates".

Mahua Moitra, Trinamool Congress MP, took to X to demand answers from the SEBI chief to several questions related to the new report.

SEBI, Buch deny charges in Hindenburg report

SEBI said in a statement: "Investors may also like to take note of the disclaimer in the report that states that readers should assume that Hindenburg Research may have short positions in the securities covered in the report." The capital market regulator denied the allegation that it had not taken any action against the Adani Group and made changes in the SEBI (REIT) Regulations, 2014, to benefit Blackstone. It said "claims that such regulations, changes to regulations or circulars issued related to REITs [Real Estate Investment Trusts] were to favour one large multinational financial conglomerate, are inappropriate".

The couple's statement

The investments in the fund [IPE Plus Fund 1] referred to in the Hindenberg report were made in 2015 when the couple were private citizens living in Singapore, Ms. Buch and her spouse said in a statement, in addition to explaining the reasons for investing in that fund. "The decision to invest in this fund was because the Chief Investment Officer, Anil Ahuja, is Dhaval's [Mr. Buch] childhood friend from school and IIT Delhi and, being an ex-employee of Citibank, J.P. Morgan and 3i Group plc, had many decades of a strong investing career. The fact that these were the drivers of the investment decision is borne out by the fact that when, in 2018, Mr. Ahuja, left his position as CIO of the fund, we redeemed the investment in that fund," the couple said in the statement.

They further said that at no point did the fund invest in instruments related to any company of Adani as disclosed by Mr. Ahuja. All regulations of SEBI were approved by its Board [and not by Chairperson] after extensive public consultation, they added.

Reacting to the Buchs' rebuttal, Hindenburg on X said the clarification confirms a "massive conflict of interest". "Buch's response now confirms her investment in an obscure Bermuda/Mauritius fund structure, alongside money allegedly siphoned by Vinod Adani," the firm said. On Ms. Buch's remarks that her husband used the consulting entities, starting in 2019 to transact with unnamed "prominent clients", it asked if these included clients SEBI is tasked with regulating.

4 fishermen injured in mid-sea attack

The Hindu Bureau
NAGAPATTINAM

Four fishermen from Nagapattinam were hospitalised on Sunday after being attacked by unidentified persons, suspected to be Sri Lankans, while fishing off the Vedaranyam coast.

M. Sivasankar, 55, P. Selvakrishnan, 21, P. Dhanasekaran, 37, and K. Rajagopal, 54, from Arcot Thurai near Vedaranyam, had ventured into the sea on Saturday. They were intercepted by three Tamil-speaking persons on a boat. The trio boarded the Nagapattinam fishermen's vessel and allegedly assaulted them with weapons before robbing them of their possessions, including a fishing net, a GPS device, a walkie-talkie, torch lights, a mobile phone, a silver chain and a silver ring.

Adani case: SC had said it can transfer probe if bias found

The top court, in its January judgment, acknowledged its power to transfer an investigation from 'authorised agency' if there was strong evidence on record that the probe was *prima facie* tainted

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

Pat on the back: The court had said the SEBI's conduct of the investigation 'inspired confidence'.

The Supreme Court had said cogent evidence of bias or portrayal of inadequacy would convince it to transfer a probe to an independent agency or a court-appointed Special Investigation Team (SIT) while refusing a plea to drop the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) from investigating Hindenburg's allegations of share price manipulations and other irregularities against the Adani Group.

The judgment was delivered by a three-judge Bench headed by Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud on January 3.

In fact, the court had said SEBI's conduct of the investigation "inspired confidence". The court patted SEBI on the back for conducting a "comprehensive investigation". At the time, the SEBI had concluded 22 of the 24 investigations. It was waiting for inputs from "external agencies/entities" before deciding on the future course action to take in the remaining two probes. This was the last report on the status of the investigation in the Supreme Court.

The court's judgment had brought quietus to criticism about SEBI's probe into the Adani Group for the past eight months. However, a storm is gathering with Hindenburg's latest allegations against SEBI chief Madhabi Puri Buch. The shortseller has accused Ms. Buch of having a stake in obscure offshore entities used in what it alleged was "the Adani money siphoning scandal".

The Opposition has taken to social media. Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi has tweeted that the integrity of the SEBI has been gravely compromised by the allegations against its Chairperson.

The top court, in its January 3 judgment, had acknowledged its power under Article 32 and Article 142 of the Constitution to transfer an investigation from the "authorised agency" to the CBI or constitute an SIT.

However, it had said this was a rare power, to be used only if there was strong evidence on record that the investigation was *prima facie* tainted or biased and its continuation would lead to a "failure of justice".

"Unless the authority statutorily entrusted with the power to investigate portrays a glaring, wilful and deliberate inaction in carrying out the investigation, the court will ordinarily not supplant the authority which has been vested with the power to investigate," the top court had explained.

One of the grounds the SC had highlighted for transferring an investigation was when accusations were levelled against the "top officials of the investigating agency thereby allowing them to influence the investigation". Transfer of the probe to another agency would be then necessary to instil confidence in the investigation.

In fact, the top court had turned the spotlight on Hindenburg. "The loss which has been sustained by Indian investors as a result of the volatility caused by the short positions taken by Hindenburg Research and other entities should be probed," Chief Justice Chandrachud had observed.

Anantnag anti-terror operation continues; injured civilian dies

Peerzada Ashiq
SRINAGAR

Security personnel during an encounter with terrorists in Anantnag on Sunday. PTI

A civilian died of injuries on Sunday as an operation against terrorists "highly trained in jungle warfare" continued for the second consecutive day in the upper reaches of south Kashmir's Anantnag district.

Two soldiers were killed and two civilians injured during an exchange of fire between the security forces and a group of hiding terrorists on Saturday. The police said they would investigate the presence of civilians near the encounter site in Kokernag's Ahlan area, which has a rough terrain with a dense forest cover.

"The police are investigating the role of civilians as to how they were so close to the terrorists," Inspector-General of Police V.K. Birdi said.

Role of civilians

The police suspect the presence of three or four terrorists in the upper reaches of Kokernag, at an altitude of about 10,000 ft. The combing operation by the security forces continued at the encounter site deep in the forest range, over nine kilometres away from the road.

The Army identified the deceased soldiers as Havildar Dipak Kumar Yadav and Lance Naik Praveen Sharma.

"The Chinar Warriors salute their immense valour and sacrifice, express deepest condolences, and stand in solidarity with the bereaved families," an Army spokesperson said.

The trapped group of terrorists is believed to have been involved in the attack in Doda on July 16.

A second encounter between hiding terrorists and security forces broke out in the higher reaches of Basantgarh in Udhampur district on Sunday evening.

"Operation is going on. Three to four terrorists are likely to be trapped in the area," officials said.

'11 Bangladesh nationals held while trying to enter India'

The Hindu Bureau
KOLKATA

Amid the political unrest in Bangladesh, the Border Security Force (BSF) has started a special drive along the international border and apprehended 11 Bangladeshi nationals trying to enter India.

"11 Bangladeshi nationals have been apprehended on border while infiltrating into India. Two each from Bengal and Tripura border and seven from Meghalaya border with Bangladesh," the BSF said. For the past several days, crowds from Bangladesh have been seen along the border allegedly trying to enter into India following the unrest in the nation.

28 killed as heavy rain lashes North, Northwest India

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

At least 28 people died in rain-related incidents on Sunday as heavy downpours lashed North and Northwest India, causing landslides, traffic chaos, and house collapses, as well as a dam breach which inundated several villages in Haryana.

The Jammu and Kashmir administration said the annual Amarnath Yatra has been suspended after heavy rain in the Shri Amarnathji Yatra area.

This was the second straight day of heavy rain in the region with Rajasthan being the worst hit as the State reported 16 deaths over two days – two on Saturday and 14 on Sunday. Its Karauli district recorded "exceptionally heavy rainfall" of 38 cm. Nine people died in Punjab's Hoshiarpur on Sunday as their vehicle was swept away by a overflowing seasonal rivulet.

Heavy rain lashed central, south, southwest, and east Delhi too, leading to waterlogging and traffic snarls on roads. Officials said a seven-year-old boy drowned in a waterlogged park in Rohini's Sector 20 the previous evening.

Rains lashed many parts of Punjab and Haryana too.

Agricultural fields at many places were submerged and officials said the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) has been called in.

Wife of former Manipur MLA killed in 'bomb blast' at home

The Hindu Bureau
IMPHAL

Sapam Charubala Haokip

The wife of a former Manipur MLA died in an explosion at their residence in Kangpokpi district's E. Mulam village on Saturday afternoon, the police said.

A two-time Congress legislator who joined the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in 2022, Yamthong Haokip was at home when his wife, Sapam Charubala Haokip, was struck by a suspected bomb while burning waste. Mr. Haokip and their daughter escaped unhurt.

In his complaint at the Saikul police station on Sunday, the former MLA said his 59-year-old wife was "hit by an explosive item" suspected "to be a bomb" while cleaning the house and compound around 3 p.m. on Saturday. She was rushed to a health centre at Saikul but died of excessive bleeding due to the blast.

Mr. Haokip sought an on-the-spot investigation and requested the police to identify the explosive material that killed his wife, a Meitei from Khurai in Imphal East district.

"We have launched a thorough investigation to find out if any individual or organisation is involved in the incident," a police officer said in Saikul, one of the hotspots of the ethnic conflict between Meitei and Kuki-Zo people in Manipur since May 3, 2023.

He said the post-mortem examination of the victim's body was completed for the family to proceed with the last rites.

Mr. Haokip was elected from the Saikul Assembly constituency, which is dominated by Kuki-Zo people.

The fatal blast happened a day after four people were killed in a gunfight between members of the United Kuki Liberation Front and some Kuki "village volunteers" in Tengnoupal district.

Airport X-ray machine tender comes under the scanner

Dinakar Peri
NEW DELHI

A tender to procure 770 dual-use X-ray baggage inspection systems (XBIS) for airports across the country has run into a controversy following complaints of corruption and attempts to favour a particular company.

Union Minister of State for Social Justice and Empowerment Ramdas Athawale and Mathura MP Hema Malini have written to Civil Aviation Minister K. Rammohan Naidu raising the matter. It has also come to light that the systems supplied by the Indian company, which is alleged to be "unduly favoured", have not met the set standards. The Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) and several airports have raised concerns on multiple occasions over the past few years.

The tender for the supply, installation, testing and commissioning of the system at various airports in India, with one-year onsite warranty and seven-year comprehensive annual maintenance contract with spares, was issued by the Airports Authority of India (AAI) with October 16, 2023, as the due date to submit bids.

The estimated cost of the tender is ₹306.5 crore. These machines are meant to replace the scanners at airport security check counters that have completed their service life, sources said.

One Indian company has qualified the bid, while a Brazilian company, an established manufacturer which tied up with an Indian company to bid, was disqualified on technical grounds, a source said.

In a letter to Mr. Naidu dated June 28, Mr. Athawale wrote, "The company (Brazilian manufacturer) has accused and invited attention towards suspicion of corruption in evaluation of tender by breaking rules of Airports Authority of India by respect to offices knowingly... Grateful if you could kindly issue directions concerned to investigate the case and make a fair inquiry in order to avoid injustice with the above company at the earliest."

The CISF reports received in July-end from the Delhi terminals show severe malfunctioning of the machines.

Another letter to Mr. Naidu by Ms. Hema Malini on June 27, said, "I also feel serious irregularities in evaluation, and undue favour to some of the bidders by AAI, which needs to be investigated before placing the purchase order."

Flight safety concerns

The two letters, as well as several complaints and performance evaluation reports on the earlier lot of machines supplied by the same company, have been reviewed by *The Hindu*. These show the magnitude of the issue, raising serious concern regarding flight safety and security. Queries sent to the stakeholders, including the Civil Aviation Ministry, did not elicit a response.

Through a tender issued in June 2021, the AAI procured 219 scanning machines from the company, in line with the efforts to promote "Make in India". But several allegations of procedural deviation and favouritism were raised. Officials in the know, on condition of anonymity, said the machines were accepted despite deficiencies during their performance evaluation, which documents accessed also show. Of the total 219 scanners, 129 have been installed across the country – 22 in the western region, 33 in the north, 10 in the northeast, 26 in the east and 38 in the southern region. In some airports, the machines have not been accepted because of very poor performance and not meeting the tender's technical specifications and functional requirements during the site acceptance test, one of the sources cited above said.

In July-end, reports were received from the CISF at the Delhi terminals showing severe malfunctioning, documents show. The Bureau of Civil Aviation Security has asked for comparative reports of different scanners installed at all airports, a source said.

For instance, a report from the Visakhapatnam airport on December 24, 2021, says the resolution of visual display unit of these particular scanners is very high; so display of all images is very light in colour (organic/inorganic or metallic) resulting in "inconvenience of screeners" to detect match sticks, electronic lighters and so on. These machines show them in light orange, while in other scanners "organic colour is of different density which is much easier to detect".

In another instance, the CISF commandant sent a report to the Airport Director, Patna, on January 18, 2021, making several observations from a performance evaluation. Some of these are, "Heavy items like keys, coins are not clearly visible. Ghee, oils and other liquids are not clear. Colour of items are different from existing established scanners."

Documents show that during the pre-tender evaluation phase, at least on four occasions between November 2020 and December 2021, the CISF has communicated the underperformance to the AAI. Similarly, Kolkata, Visakhapatnam, Patna, Udaipur and Indore airports have reported issues, documents show. All trials are recorded on video, which can be accessed to ascertain any deviations in procedure, officials noted.

Uttar Pradesh bypolls: BSP to contest all 10 seats

The Hindu Bureau
LUCKNOW

The Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) will contest the Assembly byelections to all 10 seats in Uttar Pradesh, party president Mayawati said after a meeting with senior leaders and district chiefs here on Sunday.

"People's interest in these bypolls increased significantly due to the BJP government making the election a prestige issue. In light of it the BSP also decided to field its candidates in all the seats and fight the elections," reads a statement from the Bahujan Samaj Party.

The byelection are being held as MLAs of nine seats became Lok Sabha members after the 2024 election. Another seat fell vacant following the conviction of an MLA.

The decision by the BSP is a significant departure from the past where Mayawati-led party mostly avoided fighting byelections.

Addressing the BSP leaders, Ms. Mayawati accused the ruling BJP of engaging in bulldozer politics aimed at diverting attention of the common people from fundamental issues such as price rise and unemployment.

In Jharkhand, INDIA bloc begins seat-sharing talks

RJD has sought 22 seats, Cong. 33 seats, and JMM more than 43 seats; accommodating CPI(ML) is another challenge for the allies as the party is supporting the government with a lone MLA

Amit Bhelari
RANCHI

In the run-up to the Assembly election in Jharkhand, hard bargaining is on in the ruling Indian National Developmental, Inclusive Alliance over the seat-sharing formula in the tribal-dominated State. The election to the 81-member Assembly will be held later this year.

The three big players – Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM), Congress, and Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) – have begun closed-door meetings.

Jharkhand Congress incharge Ghulam Ahmad Mir and party State president Rajesh Thakur met JMM executive president and Chief Minister Hemant Soren at his official residence in Ranchi on Sunday. The JMM has demanded more than 43 seats, the Congress 33, and the RJD 22. Accommodating the CPI(ML) is another challenge as the party with a single MLA is supporting the Soren government.

In the 2019 Assembly election, the JMM contested 43 seats and won 30, the Congress 31 and 16, and the RJD seven and one. The CPI(ML) contested 15 and won one.

Gearing up: Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren with Congress leaders Rajesh Thakur and Ghulam Ahmad Mir on Sunday. ANI

Speaking to *The Hindu*, Mr. Thakur said, "Last election, we contested 31 seats, but this time we will contest 33 because two more MLAs have joined the Congress – J.P. Patel of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and Pradeep Yadav of the Jharkhand Vikas Morcha (Prajtantrik). There will be no problems in the seat sharing and when formal talks begin all the aspects would be discussed, including the candidates and their winning capability. Preparation is going on for all 81 seats as in case we get a different seat from last time, we will be ready to contest that seat too. According to the situation, there could be exchange of seats as well. Seat-sharing would be completed by next month."

Support base

With the formal merger of the Marxist Coordination Committee with the CPI (ML) on Saturday, the Left party will demand more. Requesting anonymity, a CPI(ML) leader said the party was eyeing the Dhanwar, Bagodar, Nirsa, Sindri and Jamua seats where it has a support base. At present, the party holds Bagodar, which is represented by CPI(ML) MLA Vinod Kumar Singh.

JMM central spokesperson Manoj Pandey said the final decision would be taken by Mr. Hemant and party patriarch Shibu Soren. "Pressure from party workers and the ground reality indicates that JMM should contest more seats than last Assembly election. However, the final decision would be taken by Hemant Soren*ji*," Mr. Pandey said.

Jharkhand RJD president Sanjay Singh Yadav said, "The situation of 2019 Assembly election and 2024 is different. Last time we gave our seats to alliance partners where RJD was winning from five terms. We will not do the same thing again and again. We gave Manika, Bhawnathpur, Garhwa, Jamua, Jarmundi, and other seats to our allies. I have informed RJD chief Lalu Prasad Yadav*ji* that RJD is ready to contest on 22 seats. The final decision would be taken by him."

BJP and RSS attempt to bridge gaps ahead of polls, set up coordination panels

Nistula Hebbar
NEW DELHI

After large sections of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh cadre stayed away from campaign during the Lok Sabha election, the BJP has actively won back its ideological mothership. With an eye on the coming Maharashtra and Haryana Assembly elections, coordination committees of the RSS and the party are being set up.

In Maharashtra, RSS joint general secretary Atul Limaye has been told to coordinate efforts between the BJP and RSS for the election narrative and campaign.

"During the Lok Sabha election, many of the RSS cadres had kept away from the campaign and [from] drumming up support for the *Mahayuti* candidates as they were upset with the inclusion of the Ajit Pawar-led Nationalist Congress Party in the alliance, and other internal issues. After this, efforts have been made to effect a rapprochement within the ideological *parivar* (family), and [to enable] closer coordination," a senior leader in the BJP Maharashtra unit said.

Sections of RSS cadre stayed away from election work during the Lok Sabha polls. FILE PHOTO

For Haryana, another RSS joint general secretary, Arun Kumar, who has been already in charge of coordination between the BJP and the RSS, is the point person. Both organisations held marathon meetings several days ago on the Haryana Assembly election to thrash out campaign and other issues. Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan (the BJP's incharge for the Haryana election) and Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini were present at those meetings.

Testy relationship

The Lok Sabha election exposed the testy relationship between the RSS and the BJP, which was not helped by BJP president J.P. Nadda's statement during an interview that the BJP was now "*saksham*" (capable) of deploying its own personnel for the campaign. After the BJP came back to power, though with a reduced number of 240 seats and dependent on allies, including the Janata Dal (United) and the Telugu Desam Party (TDP), there have been attempts to bridge the distance between the BJP and the RSS.

Senior RSS leader Suresh Soni has been mediating between the top leadership in both the BJP and the RSS, and the government recently notified an order that lifted a ban on public servants from being a member of the RSS, a move it could have undertaken anytime in the past 10 years that the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) has been in power.

The Assembly elections in Maharashtra, Jharkhand and Haryana are crucial to the BJP as it is defending its government in two States, and hoping to come back to power in the third. More importantly, success or failure in these elections will be crucial to the political authority that the BJP would want vested in itself.

In full flow

As the water level in the Sardar Sarovar dam in Gujarat rose following heavy rain and release of water from the Omkareshwar dam in Madhya Pradesh, authorities opened nine radial gates by 1.5 metres on Sunday. The water level was at 134.75 metres in the morning as against the full reservoir level of 138.68 metres. Residents of 25 villages in Vadodara have been asked not to go near the Narmada river. ANI

Constitution does not have provision for creamy layer among SC/STs: Law Minister

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

Union Minister of State for Law Arjun Ram Meghwal has accused the Opposition of creating confusion among people over the Supreme Court's "observation" on a creamy layer among the Scheduled Caste (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST) communities, and said the Constitution had no provision for it.

In an interview, he said the BJP-led NDA government would follow B.R. Ambedkar's Constitution and would continue the reservation system for SCs and STs as provided in it.

Mr. Meghwal noted that though the Opposition was aware that the top court had only made an "observation" on creamy layer, it was trying to create confusion among people.

On Saturday, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge had said that the idea of denying reservation to SCs and STs on account of the creamy layer concept was "condemnable". He also said the government should have brought legislation in Parliament to nullify the part of the recent Supreme Court judgment that talked about the issue.

Arjun Ram Meghwal.

Mr. Meghwal underlined that the top court had said that if the States wanted, they could do sub-classification. But it did not make any decision on creamy layer. It was an observation, he said."There is a difference between direction and observation," he reminded the Opposition.

Earlier this month, a seven-judge Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court, led by Chief Justice D.Y. Chandrachud, ruled in a 6:1 majority judgment that the State governments were permitted to sub-classify communities within the SC list based on empirical data.

Supreme Court judge B.R. Gavai had said the States must evolve a policy for identifying the creamy layer even among the Scheduled Castes and Schedule Tribes and deny them the benefit of reservation.

The Union Cabinet, at a meeting chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday, held a detailed discussion on the Supreme Court judgment on the sub-categorisation of reservation for SCs and STs as granted in the Constitution. "It is the well-thought view of the Union Cabinet that the NDA government is firmly committed to the provisions in the Constitution given by Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar," Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw had told presspersons.

NEET-PG examination held across 170 cities

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

The NEET-PG 2024 was successfully conducted in two shifts at 416 centres across 170 cities on Sunday by the National Board of Examinations in Medical Sciences, an autonomous body under the Union Health Ministry.

The National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test-Post Graduate is a medical entrance exam. It was scheduled to be held on June 23 but was postponed as a "precautionary measure" in the wake of allegations on the integrity of certain competitive exams.

The exam was conducted in two shifts on the same day such that the best and reputed centres could be chosen for the exam, the Ministry said.

Officials from the Health Ministry and NBEMS kept a close watch to ensure the smooth conduct of the examination, it said.

More than 1,950 independent appraisers and 300 flying squad members were deputed at the centres, the Ministry said.

TAMIL NADU GENERATION AND DISTRIBUTION CORPORATION LTD
Notice Inviting Tenders (E-Tendering Process)

Sl.No	Tender Inviting Authority	Specification No.	Total
1	CE / MTS	001	1

For details of Works / Procurement / Due date of submission / opening, viewing and downloading of e-tenders, visit websites: **www.tangedco.gov.in, www.tenders.tn.gov.in, www.tntenders.gov.in**

DIPR/2912/Tender/2024

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E-Tender Notice No./P&P/OPP-SDPT/MEE/2024-25 Dt: 08.08.2024

E-TENDER NOTICE

TGOILFED, Hyderabad invites sealed tenders from potential and reputed manufacturers or companies authorized suppliers / contractors for **"Design, Supply, Fabrication, Erection & Commissioning of 360 KLD expandable to 720 KLD Capacity Consisting of Multiple effect evaporator, ATFE and Paddle Drier with Supporting Structure, Sheeting and Condensate Treatment Plant of 600 KLD expandable to 1200 KLD capacity" on Turnkey Basis** at Oil Palm Processing Complex, Narmetta, Siddipet-Dist., Telangana State. **Note:** (1) Publish of E-Tender: **12.08.2024 at 5.00 PM.**, (2) Pre Bid Meeting: **22.08.2024 at 02.30 PM.**, (3) Last Date & Time for uploading E-Tenders: **29.08.2024 at 3:00 PM.**, (4) All the details related to tender will be available in e-Tender website: **https://tender.telangana.gov.in**

Sd/- MANAGING DIRECTOR

Jaishankar concludes three-day key visit to Maldives

Press Trust of India
MALE

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar on Sunday concluded a crucial visit to Male, assuring the country's top leadership that the Maldives remains an important partner of India in maintaining peace, stability and prosperity in the Indian Ocean region.

Mr. Jaishankar's three-day visit was the first high-level trip to the atoll nation from New Delhi after President Mohamed Muizzu, seen as a pro-China leader, assumed office last November.

India's relationship with the Maldives soon came under severe strain owing to the actions of the new government here.

Boosting ties: External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar with Maldives Foreign Minister Moosa Zameer in Addu City on Sunday. ANI

During his visit, Mr. Jaishankar called on President Muizzu and also held wide-ranging talks with his counterpart, Moosa Zameer.

He met Maldivian Defence Minister Ghassan Maumoon, the Ministers of Finance and Economic Development & Trade and the Governor of the Maldives Monetary Authority.

Mr. Jaishankar's visit highlights the importance of the Maldives, India's maritime neighbour, as a key partner in the "Neighbourhood First" policy and India's Vision 'SAGAR' (Security and Growth for All in the Region), the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said in a statement on Sunday.

"Maldives remains an important partner of India in maintaining peace, stability and prosperity in the Indian Ocean region. The visit reaffirmed the continued commitment of both countries to strengthening their multi-dimensional bilateral relationship and deepening their close people-to-people ties," it said.

'Continued assistance'

During his meeting with President Muizzu, Mr. Jaishankar extended greetings from Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

President Muizzu appreciated India's continued development assistance provided to the Maldives and reaffirmed his commitment to deepen the India-Maldives relationship further, the MEA statement said.

At the President's Office, Mr. Jaishankar and Mr. Zameer jointly inaugurated, in the presence of President Muizzu, India's Line of Credit (LoC)-assisted project of water and sewerage network on 28 islands of the Maldives.

He held discussions with Mr. Zameer and reviewed the entire gamut of bilateral relations.

He had productive discussions with Mr. Maumoon during which both sides reaffirmed their commitment to deepen the India-Maldives defence and security partnership.

KMF Karnataka Co-Operative Milk Producers' Federation Limited
KMF Complex: Dr. M. H. Marigowda Road, DRC Post, Bangalore-560 029.
Tel: 080-25536625 / 26096834, e-mail : engg@kmf.coop

IFT No: KMF/ENGG/MD/ETP_BIOGAS/2024-25 Date: 09-08-2024

TENDER NOTIFICATION
[Two cover System] [Through Karnataka Public Procurement Portal only]

Karnataka Milk Federation Ltd; Bengaluru invites tenders from the eligible ETP Turnkey contractors/ suppliers / manufacturers & any other eligible companies who have executed similar kind of works may participate in the tender as indicated below, by logging on to website https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in and also contact Help desk E-mail: hphelpdesk.blr@intarvo.com, support@eprochelpdesk.com and helpline no. +91-8046010000, +91-8068948777, 080-22230960, 080-22234115

Sl. No.	Name of the work	Qty	EMD (Rs.)
1	Supply, Erection, Testing & Commissioning of 125 KVA Capacity BioGas Engine including Biogas Scrubber for Generation of Power from 1700 KLPD Capacity Effluent Treatment Plant at Mother Dairy at Yelahanka, Bengaluru District	1 Job	1,80,000/-

1. Tender schedules may be downloaded from dated **12-08-2024 to 26-08-2024 up to 4-00 pm.**
2. Last date for Tender submission on date: **26-08-2024 up to 4.00 pm**
3. Tender [Part 1] to be opened on date: **28-08-2024 at 11.30 am.**

The interested & reputed applicants may participate in the tender by logging on to website **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in**, Henceforth changes/modification in the tender, it will be uploaded in the KPP Portal only.

For Karnataka Co-Op. Milk Federation Ltd.,
Sd/- Director [Engineering-1]

INBRIEF

Mamata urges Majhi to look into 'assault' on labourers

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Sunday called up her Odisha counterpart Mohan Charan Majhi and requested him to look into alleged incidents of assault on labourers from the State there, a senior official said. "Several people have gone from West Bengal to Odisha to work. There are reports that they are being beaten up and tortured by locals suspecting them to be Bangladeshis. The Bengal CM spoke to her Odisha counterpart and requested him to look into the matter," the official said. He added Ms. Banerjee also urged the labourers to return to West Bengal as soon as possible and grab the opportunities available there. PTI

Activists in Sikkim protest against shooting of stray dog

Animal rights activists in Sikkim's capital Gangtok took out a rally on Sunday to protest the shooting of a stray dog almost a month ago. The dog was found dead with a wound on its chest on July 19. Its carcass, buried by some unidentified people in the town's Kazi Road area, was exhumed and taken to a polyclinic where an examination confirmed that it had been shot. Members of organisations such as Guardian of Sikkim, People For Animals, and Citizens Animal Shelter Sikkim took to the streets of Gangtok to demand action.

Protests continue in Bengal over rape, murder of doctor

Kolkata Police Commissioner meets protesters, urges them not to believe in rumours; students can approach police with queries, he says; doctors' group calls for halt of elective services in hospitals

The Hindu Bureau
KOLKATA

Protests continued to rage across medical colleges in West Bengal on Sunday over the alleged rape and murder of a woman doctor at the R.G. Kar Medical College and Hospital in Kolkata, affecting services for the third consecutive day.

Hospitals in other districts joined the protests as well. Outpatient departments (OPDs) are not open on Sundays in State-run hospitals.

The body of a 31-year-old doctor was found on the third floor of the hospital on Friday. The post-mortem examination revealed that she had been sexually assaulted.

On Saturday, a civil police volunteer engaged by the Kolkata Police was arrested for the crime and remanded in 14 days of police custody.

Under mounting pressure, the State government removed Sanjay Vashisth, the hospital's medical superintendent. Bulbul Mukhopadhyay, dean of student affairs, has been given the additional charge of hospital superintendent.

Doctors protesting at the R.G. Kar Medical College and Hospital in Kolkata on Sunday. DEBASISH BHADURI

The resident doctors association of the R.G. Kar Medical College and Hospital ceased work on emergency services, demanding a judicial inquiry and compensation for the family of the deceased.

Commissioner of Kolkata Police Vineet Kumar Goyalsaid, "We tried to address the query of the students. Today, the post-mortem report has been shared with the family as per guidelines of the Supreme Court." Pointing out that there were several rumours about the involvement of multiple persons in the crime, Mr. Goyal asked people not to respond to such misinformation.

The Commissioner said that the students can approach the police with their queries.

Mr. Goyal and Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee had said that they had no problem with an investigation by an independent agency if the family so desired.

Meanwhile, support for the agitating doctors came in from several quarters. The Federation of Resident Doctors' Association of India (FORDA) has supported the ongoing strike and called for a nationwide halt of elective services in hospitals on Monday. The West Bengal Doctors Forum also wrote to Ms. Banerjee, requesting her to form an impartial inquiry committee.

West Bengal BJP president and Union Minister Sukanta Majumdar wrote a letter to Union Health Minister J.P. Nadda, demanding investigation by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).

"I request you to send a team of the National Medical Commission to investigate the matter and take appropriate action. Also enforce stringent security protocols, including the installation of more CCTV cameras, the presence of adequate security personnel, and the restriction of unauthorized access to sensitive areas within medical institutions," he said in the letter.

F&O norms proposed by SEBI to hit brokers, exchanges: reports

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

Many fear if the measures are implemented, the number of investors could decrease.

Stock exchanges and brokers, catering to retail traders, could be hit hard by the Securities and Exchange Board of India's proposed measures for futures & options (F&O) trading regulations, with market volumes slumping 30%-40%, according to reports. If these measures are implemented, the number of investors could decrease.

Discount brokers, who depend heavily on retail investors, are expected to be more affected than traditional full-service brokers.

The SEBI, in its consultation paper in July, proposed seven measures, including increasing minimum contract size and upfront collection of option premiums, intra-day monitoring of position limits, rationalisation of strike prices, removal of calendar spread benefit on expiry day and increase in near contract expiry margin. The SEBI stated that these measures are aimed at enhancing investor protection.

According to a report by Jefferies, the proposed measures to reduce the number of weekly option contracts from 18 to six could impact around 35% of industry premiums. However, if trading shifts to the remaining contracts, the overall impact can be reduced to 20-25%.

IIFL Securities could see the highest impact from the withdrawal of weekly options (only one per exchange allowed) as index options account for 98% of the volumes. IIFL Securities expects the National Stock Exchange (NSE) to be more affected than the BSE because 60% of the NSE's revenue comes from options trading, compared with 40% for the BSE. It estimates that by 2026, the NSE's earnings could be reduced by 25-30% while the BSE's earnings could drop by 15%-18%.

PM Modi releases 109 high-yielding seed varieties

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday released 109 high-yielding, climate-resilient, and biofortified seed varieties of agricultural and horticultural crops, aiming to enhance farm productivity and farmers' income.

Developed by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), these varieties span 61 crops, including 34 field crops and 27 horticultural crops. The field crop varieties include cereals, millets, forage crops, oilseeds, pulses, sugarcane, cotton, and fiber crops.

For horticulture, the Prime Minister released new varieties of fruits, vegetables, plantation crops, tubers, spices, flowers, and medicinal plants.

Mr. Modi unveiled the seeds at three experimental agriculture plots at Delhi's Pusa Campus.

Biotechnologists detect difference in use of nitrogen by rice varieties

Jacob Koshy
NEW DELHI

Biotechnologists at Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University (GGU) in New Delhi have discovered a wide variation among popular varieties of rice in India in their ability to use nitrogen. This knowledge can be used to develop newer varieties that use less nitrogen and are high-yielding, thus slashing expenditure on imported fertilizers and reducing nitrogen-linked pollution.

"Cereals consume two-thirds of all urea in India, led by rice. Poor nitrogen-use efficiency (NUE) wastes N (nitrogen)-fertilizers worth ₹1 trillion a year in India and over $170 billion per year globally," N. Raghuram, Professor at GGU and lead author of the paper, said, reporting these findings.

Nitrogen use efficiency refers to the yield of a crop relative to the nitrogen (natural and artificial) available to it.

Nitrogen-use efficiency refers to the yield of a crop relative to the nitrogen, both natural and artificial, available to it.

"Worse, N-fertilizers are the main source of nitrous oxide and ammonia pollution of air and nitrate/ammonium pollution of water, affecting our health, biodiversity, and climate change. Yet, we don't have a ranking of any Indian crop varieties in terms of their NUE for crop improvement by selection or breeding," Dr. Raghuram said.

The paper was published last week in the peer-reviewed *Journal of Plant Growth Regulation*.

Wider approach

The NUE of the best varieties were five times as much as the least, the investigation found. However, a high NUE doesn't always mean the highest yields and farmers in India generally prefer varieties with the highest yields.

"The focus of Indian agriculture has for a long time been to solely increase yield. This was necessary during the Green Revolution but this also meant more synthetic fertilizers, more wastage, and pollution. India has tens and thousands of rice varieties but only a few are actually used and studied as part of agricultural research. To find newer crops that have improved NUE and yields, we have to have a wider approach," Dr. Raghuram told *The Hindu*.

The study was co-authored by Ashu Tyagi and Navjyoti Chakraborty, both scientists from the Centre for Sustainable Nitrogen and Nutrient Management, School of Biotechnology, GGU.

While some improvements in NUE could be done by improving fertilizer formulations, legume-based crop-rotations, and crop management practices, it has now become necessary to lay more stress on improving the crop using biotechnology, the authors said.

NCERT removes cartoon on coalition politics, says it cast 'India in negative light'

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The cartoon depicted leaders from 1990 onwards, posing questions on survival of their governments

The National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) has removed a political cartoon from the Class 12 political science textbook, *Politics in India since Independence,* saying "it shows India in a negative light".

The cartoon in Chapter 8 – Recent Developments in Indian Politics – depicted political leaders from 1990 onwards and posed questions on the survival of their respective governments.

The cartoon by Ravishankar, originally published in the *India Today* magazine, had on display former Prime Ministers V.P. Singh (1990), Chandra Shekhar (1990), P.V. Narasimha Rao (1991), H.D. Deve Gowda (1996), I.K. Gujral (1997), and A.B. Vajpayee (1998) and a string of questions on the survival of their coalition governments and democracy.

Change made in April

The cartoon depicted the long phase of coalition politics in India from the National Front led by V.P. Singh in 1989, the United Front in 1996-97, and the BJP-led coalition in 1998 to the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) in 1999, and the United Progressive Alliance in 2004 and 2009.

This trend changed in 2014 when the BJP won a full majority in the Lok Sabha and led an NDA government.

However, a decade later, India yet again has a coalition government at the Centre post the 2024 Lok Sabha election.

The document published by the NCERT depicting the changes dates back to April, prior to the 2024 election and the formation of the NDA coalition government led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in which the BJP does not have a majority on its own.

The illustration has been replaced with two students conversing with each other.

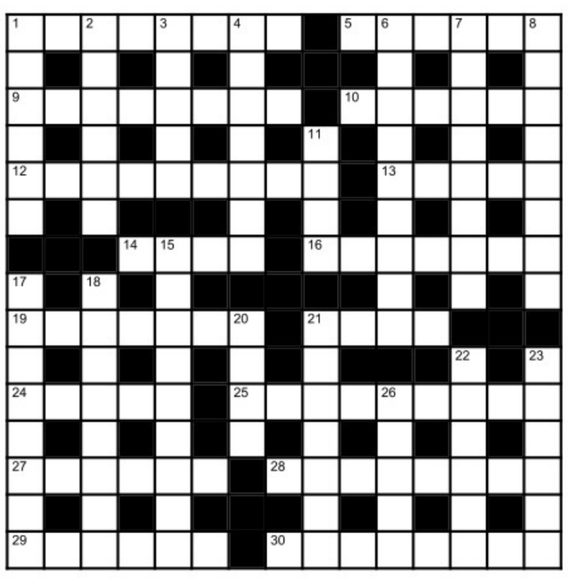
One student questions, "Does that mean that we will always have coalitions? Or can the national parties consolidate their positions again?" The other answers, "I am not worried about whether it is a single party or a coalition government. I am more worried about what they do. Does a coalition government involve more compromises? Can we not have bold and imaginative policies in a coalition?"

TH CROSSWORD + 14251

(set by KrisKross)

To solve this puzzle online, get across to our crossword site. @ *https://qrgo.page.link/jjpTn*

SCAN TO PLAY



Across

1 Cut work times in New Delhi (8)
5 Mishandles a vehicle - engine's gutted! (6)
9 Tally updated menu cost (8)
10 Wife reaches Bury in time for Christmas (6)
12 Lawyer from Rhode Island is involved in trade (9)
13 Run in the early morning, becoming fatigued (5)
14 Free European trip (4)
16 Air train (7)
19 Zee TV originally broadcast entertaining genre of music - swingers could get high on it (7)
21 Lot of rich men losing margins (4)
24 Switzerland poet's always in high spirits (5)
25 Ready bed finally... light off, and a toy for company (5,4)
27 Toiler baked loaf (6)
28 "Concentrate! Study! Study!" say education heads (8)
29 Describe Spooner's ultimate delight (6)
30 They design pen tips (8)

Down

1 Basically wasted effort...never touched books...yet passed (4,2)
2 Jail one setter consuming alcohol in retreat (6)
3 Marshy land covered by moderate rain (5)
4 Allow IT student to go through NEET after revision (7)
6 Opener at Lord's in trouble countering spinners - he can't see clearly here (5,4)
7 Ornate suit had diamonds installed (8)
8 Hurt Frenchman's piercing cry for help (8)
11 Egg on clean plate at first polished off (4)
15 Serious member engrossed in exciting tennis (2,7)
17 Lady wearing square watch - she is very finicky (8)
18 Stuff friend with Iranian bread (8)
20 Has everyone around tried soup for starters? (4)
21 Become inaudible...deaf? (4,3)
22 Plays a trick and collapses in the auditorium (6)
23 Places for putting vegetables (6)
26 Upset, miserable, do you have to cry shrilly? (5)

SUDOKU

	1			5				
			4					
8	5			2		9		7
1		3			4	8		
		9	5		7	3		
		5	1			4		9
7		8		1			5	4
					5			
				7			6	

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DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★☆☆

Solution to previous puzzle

P	R	E	S	S	C	O	N	F	E	R	E	N	C	E
A		N		U		N		A		I		I		N
I	N	C	U	B	U	S		N	A	M	E	T	A	G
N		O		W		E		T		E		R		A
T	E	M	P	O		T	W	A	D	D	L	I	N	G
T		I		O				S				T		E
H	E	A	D	F	I	R	S	T		R	H	E	U	M
E				E		E		I		O				E
T	A	P	I	R		S	E	C	L	U	S	I	O	N
O		A				H				G		N		T
W	O	R	K	S	T	U	D	Y		H	O	V	E	R
N		V		C		F		A		H		I		I
R	E	E	L	O	F	F		C	H	E	A	T	O	N
E		N		W		L		H		W		E		G
D	O	U	B	L	E	E	N	T	E	N	D	R	E	S

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

9	6	4	7	1	5	2	3	8
7	5	1	8	3	2	4	9	6
3	8	2	9	4	6	1	5	7
4	2	8	6	7	3	5	1	9
5	3	9	2	8	1	6	7	4
1	7	6	4	5	9	8	2	3
8	1	3	5	6	7	9	4	2
6	9	5	3	2	4	7	8	1
2	4	7	1	9	8	3	6	5

FAITH

Three steps to divinity

In the Bhagavad Gita, the verse, *Samniyamya indriya-gramam sarvatra samabuddhayah, te prapnuvanti mam eva sarva-buta-hite ratah*, presents a three-step path to attain divinity, said Swami Mitranandaji. The first step, *Samniyamya indriya-gramam* underscores mastering the control of one's senses. This control ensures one is not swayed by external circumstances, but remains steadfast in one's inner peace. *Sarvatra sama-buddhayah*, the second step, involves maintaining a balanced mind in all places and situations. This stability is rooted in understanding that every situation, even the most challenging, is temporary.

As Lord Krishna states in Chapter II, *Agamapayino'nityas tams titiksasva bharata*, the temporary nature of happiness and distress should be patiently endured. The third step, *Sarva-bhuta-hite-ratah*, signifies wishing well for all beings. A person who genuinely delights in the welfare of others and actively contributes to their development experiences true happiness through his selfless actions. This fosters a deep connection with others and enhances one's spiritual journey. Lord Kirshna assures that those who cultivate these qualities – control of senses, mental balance and altruism – will attain Him. *Te prapnuvanti mam eva* indicates that such a person ultimately achieves union with the Supreme and attains divinity.

Secure the future via a WOP plan

CHILDPLAN

Vivek Jain

Raising children for NRI parents comes with the promise of better exposure, global education and the ability to provide finer living standards. However, the last thing a parent wants is for children to have to compromise on dreams in the unfortunate circumstance of the parent passing away.

Sound financial planning ensures your child gets the best opportunities to achieve goals. This is why it's always advisable to look for specialised child plans in this context as these come with an added layer of safety in the form of Waiver of Premium (WOP).

The mechanics are straightforward yet immensely valuable. Should the policyholder pass away during the coverage period, the insurer steps in to cover premium payments, ensuring the investment plan is unaffected. This crucial provision safeguards the child's future financial well-being against all odds.

Insurance with investment

One of the distinguishing aspects of child investment plans with WOP is the seamless integration of insurance protection and investment components in it. These plans allocate premiums between insurance coverage and investments, catering to individual needs. Unlike conventional life insurance plans where coverage ceases upon disbursement of the death benefit, child plans with WOP continue to nurture the investment component until maturity. This not only ensures financial protection for the child but also fosters wealth accumulation over time.

The activation criteria for WOP are clear-cut, triggering upon the death of the policyholder. This ensures that dependents are spared the added stress of premium payments during a period of emotional upheaval. Such clarity and reliability are invaluable in navigating complexities of financial planning, especially in times of crisis.

Addressing rising education costs

The rising costs of education pose a significant challenge for parents, necessitating proactive financial planning. In case parents decide to send the children to study abroad, where educational expenses are escalating rapidly, child investment plans serve as a strategic tool for building a corpus to meet future educational needs. Whether tuition fees, books, or other school-related expenses, these plans offer a comprehensive solution to mitigate the impact of inflation and ensure uninterrupted education for the child.

Key features of child investment plans with WOP include a comprehensive blend of insurance protection, savings, and investment opportunities. The provision of financial support to the child in the event of the parent's demise underscores the intrinsic value of these plans. Moreover, the insurance company covering future premiums under the WOP option adds an extra layer of security, reinforcing the long-term viability of the investment.

Indispensable tool

In conclusion, child plans with Waiver of Premium emerge as indispensable tools for safeguarding a child's future. By combining insurance protection with investment opportunities and incorporating features like WOP, these plans offer a holistic approach towards financial planning.

In a rapidly evolving economic landscape where uncertainties abound, investing in the future of our children remains a paramount priority, and child plans with WOP serve as reliable allies in this endeavour.

As parents, it is imperative to proactively secure the financial well-being of our children, and child investment plans with WOP epitomise this ethos, providing a pathway to a brighter and more secure future.

(The writer is Head, Investments, Policybazaar.com)

Send queries on personal finance and investing to the moneywise@thehindu.co.in ID. Our experts in personal finance will respond to select queries, but will not give specific recommendations for investment in a particular mutual fund, share or fixed deposit.

Hold on: If you own international/ gold funds don't rush to sell them as the changes take effect only from April 1, 2025. GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

Untangling the Budget impact on mutual funds

Both equity and debt-oriented funds won no concessions in this Union Budget; but funds which fall in neither of these viz. gold, international categories saw some relaxations

TAXING FUNDS

Aarati Krishnan

Over a fortnight has passed since the presentation of the Union Budget. However, confusion still seems to be reigning on proposals to 'simplify and standardise' capital gains taxation. Here's a simplified account of what changes for retail investors in mutual funds (MFs), after a deep dive into the budget documents.

> Prior to Budget, there were multiple rates, methods of calculation applied to capital gains on MFs, depending on equity-debt mix of fund

> The Budget may have introduced new element of uncertainty for debt fund investors by doing away with indexation benefits in toto

Equity: Mild rise

Prior to Budget, there were multiple rates and methods of calculation applied to capital gains made on MFs, depending on the equity-debt mix of a fund. This Budget has somewhat clarified the picture by clearly differentiating between equity-oriented and debt-oriented MFs.

All MFs which own 65% or more of the assets in equities are treated as equity funds. Now ,capital gains from equity funds will be taxed at 20% if there are short-term and 12.5% if they are long-term. The holding period to define 'long term' will remain at 12 months. Earlier, long term and short-term gains from equity funds were taxed at 10% and 15% respectively. Apart from active equity funds, index funds, arbitrage funds and hybrid fund categories such as aggressive equity funds, balanced advantage funds, equity savings funds and multi-asset funds with a more than 65% equity weight, will also fall into the 'equity' category and taxed at the above rates.

Equity fund investors have, however, bagged a mild sweetener to soften the blow from higher tax rates. They will now be liable to pay long term capital gains tax only if annual gains from this source exceed ₹1.25 lakh, as opposed to ₹1 lakh earlier.

If you are a long-time investor in equity funds, all gains prior to January 31, 2018 will continue to be grandfathered (protected from tax) and only gains made thereafter will be taxed. The new tax rates kick in from July 23, 2024, the date of the Budget.

Debt: No climb-down

Budget 2023 dealt an unkind cut to debt MFs by decreeing all the capital gains made from these funds, irrespective of the investor's holding period, would be treated like income and taxed at the investor's Income-Tax slab rate.

This stance has not been changed in the 2024 Budget. All the gains from debt MFs will continue to be taxed at your slab rate, irrespective of how long you held the fund. Debt MFs for this purpose will be defined as funds which invest 65% or more of the portfolio in bonds. Therefore, taxation at slab rates will apply to all categories of debt funds whether short term, medium term or long term, gilt funds, target maturity funds and hybrid funds which invest 65% or more in bonds.

However, the Budget may have introduced a new element of uncertainty for debt fund investors by doing away with indexation benefits in toto. In the 2023 Budget, when deciding to tax all gains from debt funds at slab rates, the government kept legacy investments made before April 1, 2023 out of the purview of this change. This meant debt fund investments made prior to April 1, 2023 still enjoyed long-term capital gains tax at 20%, after indexing purchase cost for inflation.

But indexation benefits are no longer part of the statute after July 23, 2024. Therefore, it appears likely long-term capital gains on debt funds bought before April 1, 2023 will also be taxed at 12.5% without indexation. The holding period to determine 'long term' will be 24 months. It however needs to be seen if this is rectified, as was done in the case of legacy investments in property.

Global, gold funds

Both equity and debt-oriented funds won no concessions in this Budget. But funds which fall in neither of these categories saw some relaxations.

With the Budget changing the definition of 'specified mutual funds' under section 50AA of the Income Tax Act, funds which do not invest 65% or more of assets in bonds will no longer see capital gains taxed at slab rates.

The 2023 Budget, while subjecting capital gains from 'specified mutual funds' (read debt funds) to tax at slab rates defined these as funds which invest 'not more than 35% in equity shares'. This had inadvertently swept categories such as fund of funds, balanced hybrid funds, international funds and gold funds into debt taxation.

With this slip-up remedied now, only funds with over 65% investment in bonds will be subject to taxation at slab rates. Therefore, fund of funds (which do not invest over 65% in either equity or debt funds), gold and international funds will now see short-term capital gains taxed at slab rates, while long-term capital gains will be taxed at 12.5%. The holding period to decide long term is 24 months.

If you own international, gold funds don't rush to sell as the changes take effect from April 1, 2025.

What is a tactical index fund

THINKINVESTOR

The objective of a Tactical Index Fund is to reduce active risk and yet improve returns over an index fund; the fund will have a larger tracking error than a comparable index fund

Venkatesh Bangaruswamy

Previously, in this column, we discussed how Asset Management Companies (AMCs) can nudge investors in index funds to optimally take profit. Continuing this argument about helping investors improve their financial well-being, we discuss how AMCs can offer an index fund variant.

Allowing tracking error

Take a large-cap index fund benchmarked to the Nifty 50 Index. There are two reasons why an open-end index fund cannot mirror its benchmark returns. One, index fund charges a fund management fee and incurs trading cost to buy securities, whereas the index is simply a weighted average of the constituent stocks. So, the index fund's returns will be dragged down by costs. And two, the index fund will hold some cash to meet redemption request. So, it will have 51 assets in its portfolio, including cash. Therefore, the weight of each stock will be lower than that of its corresponding weight in the index. If the index were to move up, the index fund will give a lower return. This is because the return generated on the cash will be lower than the returns generated on the stocks.

This is referred to as cash drag. The index fund also receives cash from investors who continually buy units in the fund, which the fund manager will invest in the index constituents. Suffice it to know costs of managing the fund and the cash drag will lead to the index fund returns being different from that of index returns.

Tracking error is the metric that captures this difference.

Now, let us differentiate between cash held for redemption purpose and cash inflow from investors. What if the index fund manager uses investor cash inflows to time purchase of the index constituents? This will allow the fund to generate a marginally higher return than a traditional index fund and, perhaps, neutralise fund costs. Call this a Tactical Index Fund as the fund manager engages in market timing to buy the index constituents.

Conclusion

The objective of a Tactical Index Fund is to cut active risk and yet improve returns over an index fund. It will have a larger tracking error than a comparable index fund. Active risk is the risk that an active fund will underperform its benchmark because of the security-selection bets taken by the fund manager. A Tactical Index Fund will not have such active risk, as the fund manager will invest only in the index constituents.

(The author offers training programmes for individuals to manage their personal investments)

Personal Loans

Rates and Charges		Loan amount 5 lakh Tenure 5 years	Loan amount 1 lakh Tenure 5 years	(% of loan amount)
Name of Lender	**Interest Rate (%)**	**EMI (Rs)**	**EMI (Rs)**	**Processing fee**
HDFC Bank	10.50 onwards	10,747 onwards	2,149 onwards	Up to Rs 4,999
Tata Capital	10.99 onwards	10,869 onwards	2,174 onwards	Up to 5.5%
State Bank of India	11.35-15.50	10,959-12,027	2,192-2,405	1.50%(Min Rs 1,000 to Max Rs 15,000)
ICICI Bank	10.80 onwards	10,821 onwards	2,164 onwards	Up to 2%
Bank of Baroda	11.15-18.75	10,909-12,902	2,182-2,580	Up to 2% (Min Rs 1,000 Max Rs 10,000)
Axis Bank	11.25 onwards	10,934 onwards	2,187 onwards	Up to 2%
Kotak Mahindra Bank	10.99 onwards	10,869 onwards	2,174 onwards	Up to 3%
Bank of India	10.85-14.85	10,834-11,856	2,167-2,371	0.50%-1% (Min Rs250 Max Rs 10,000)
Canara Bank	10.95-16.40	10,859-12,266	2,172-2,453	0.50% (Maximum Rs 2,500)
Punjab National Bank	10.40-17.95	10,772-12,683	2,144-2,537	Up to 1%
HSBC Bank	9.99-15.00	10,621-11,895	2,124-2,379	Up to 2%
Federal Bank	11.49 onwards	10,994 onwards	2,199 onwards	Up to 3%
Union Bank of India	11.35-15.45	10,959-12,013	2,192-2,403	Up to 1% (Maximum Rs 7,500)
Bajaj Finserv	11.00 onwards	10,871 onwards	2,174 onwards	Up to 3.93%
Punjab & Sind Bank	10.75-13.50	10,809-11,505	2,162-2,301	0.50%-1%
South Indian Bank	12.85-20.60	11,338-13,414	2,268-2,683	Up to 2%
UCO Bank	12.45-12.85	11,236-11,338	2,247-2,268	Up to 1% (Minimum Rs 750)
IDFC First Bank	10.99 onwards	10,869 onwards	2,174 onwards	Up to 2%
Bank of Maharashtra	10.00-12.80	10,624-11,325	2,125-2,265	1% (Rs 1,000-Rs 10,000)
Karnataka Bank	13.43	11,487	2,297	Up to 2% of loan amount (Min. Rs 2,500 Max. Rs 8,500)
IndusInd Bank	10.49 onwards	10,744 onwards	2,149 onwards	1.5% -3.5%

Car Loans

Rates and Charges		Loan amount 5 lakh Tenure 5 years	(% of loan amount)
Name of Lender	**Interest Rate (%)**	**EMI (Rs)**	**Processing fee**
Union Bank of India	8.70 - 10.45	10,307 - 10,735	Rs 1,000
Punjab National Bank	8.75 - 10.60	10,319 - 10,772	0.25% (Rs. 1,000 - Rs. 1,500)
Bank of Baroda	8.90 - 12.70	10,355 - 11,300	Up to Rs 2,000
Canara Bank	8.70 - 12.70	10,307 - 11,300	0.25% (Maximum Rs 2,500)
Bank of India	8.85 - 10.85	10,343 - 10,834	0.25% (Rs. 1,000 - Rs. 5,000)
UCO Bank	8.45 - 10.55	10,246 - 10,759	Nil
State Bank of India	8.95 - 10.00	10,367-10,624	Up to Rs 1,500
Bank of Maharashtra*	8.70 - 13.00	10,307 - 11,377	0.25% (Rs. 1,000 - Rs. 15,000)
Indian Overseas Bank**	8.85 - 12.00	10,343 - 11,122	0.50% (Rs 500 - Rs 5,000)
ICICI Bank	9.10 onwards	10,403 onwards	Up to 2%
HDFC Bank	9.20 onwards	10,428 onwards	0.50% (Rs 3,500 - Rs 8,000)
Karnataka Bank	8.88 - 11.37	10,350 - 10,964	0.60% (Rs 3,000 - Rs 11,000)
Federal Bank	8.85 onwards	10,343 onwards	Rs 2,000 - Rs 4,500
Punjab and Sind Bank***	8.85 - 10.25	10,343 - 10,685	0.25% (Rs. 1,000 - Rs. 15,000)
South Indian Bank	8.75 onwards	10,319 onwards	0.75% (Max: Rs 10,000)
City Union Bank	14.45 - 14.95	11,751 - 11,882	1.25% (Min: Rs 1,000)

**0.25% interest rate concession for existing housing loan borrowers and corporate salary account holders
**0.50% interest rate concession to borrowers with credit scores of 800 and above. Interest rate concession of 0.25% to borrowers having credit scores of 750-799
***Concession of up to 50% on processing fee for PSB Apna Vahan Sugam.

Rates and charges as on August 7 **Source: Paisabazaar.com**

KAMPALA

Death toll from garbage dump collapse in Uganda reaches 18

AFP

The death toll from a landslide at a garbage dump in the Ugandan capital Kampala has risen to 18, amid claims the site was a disaster waiting to happen. People and livestock were engulfed in mountains of waste at the landfill in northern Kampala on Saturday after a collapse caused by heavy downpours. AFP

LONDONDERRY

Ten police officials injured during clashes in Northern Ireland

REUTERS

The Northern Irish police on Sunday criticised "disgusting" rioting by pro-Irish unity youth in Londonderry overnight that injured 10 police. The violent scenes in the city follow disturbances in Belfast and elsewhere over the last week which initially mirrored unrest in English towns in the wake of the Southport knife attack. AFP

BEIRUT

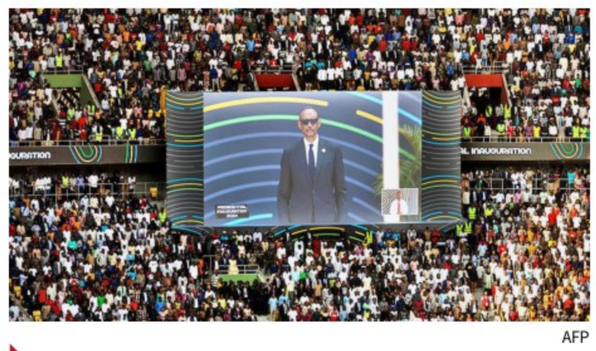
Five pro-Iran fighters killed in drone strike in eastern Syria

AFP

Five Iran-backed fighters were killed on Sunday in a drone strike in Syria's east, near the Iraqi border, a war monitor said, adding it was not clear yet who was behind the attack. The strike occurred in Syria's eastern Deir Ezzor province, where Iran wields significant influence and which is regularly targeted by Israel and the U.S. AFP

KIGALI

Kagame sworn in as Rwanda President for fourth term



AFP

Rwanda President Paul Kagame was sworn in on Sunday for a fourth term after sweeping to victory in elections last month with 99% of the vote. The outcome of the July 15 poll was never in doubt for the iron-fisted Kagame, who has ruled the small African nation since the 1994 genocide, as de facto leader and then President. AFP.

Court acquits Muhammad Yunus in graft case

Press Trust of India
DHAKA

Muhammad Yunus was on Sunday acquitted in a graft case filed by the Anti-Corruption Commission over the misappropriation of funds from the Grameen Telecom Workers and Employees Welfare Fund, three days after he took oath as the head of Bangladesh's interim government, according to a media report.

Judge Md Rabiul Alam of the Special Judge's Court-4 of Dhaka gave the order after accepting the graft agency's application, seeking to withdraw the case under the Code of Criminal Procedure, an official of the anti-graft agency was quoted as saying by *The Daily Star* newspaper.

Bangladesh govt. vows to end attacks on minority groups

Cabinet to sit with representative bodies, other groups to find ways to fix such 'heinous attacks'; new Chief Justice sworn in for Supreme Court after his predecessor quit over protesters' demand

Agence France-Presse
DHAKA

Bangladesh's new interim government said on Sunday it was working to resolve attacks on Hindus and other religious minorities reported after the dramatic ouster of autocratic Premier Sheikh Hasina. Hindus are the largest minority faith in mostly Muslim Bangladesh and are considered a steadfast support base for Ms. Hasina's party, the Awami League.

After Ms. Hasina's abrupt resignation and flight abroad on Monday, there were numerous reports of attacks against Hindu households, temples and businesses.

Limited choice: Hindus protest against the violence inflicted on their community in Dhaka on Saturday. REUTERS

"The attacks on religious minorities in some places have been noted with grave concern," the interim Cabinet said in its first official statement.

The Cabinet said it would "immediately sit with the representative bodies and other groups to find ways to resolve such heinous attacks".

The government, led by Nobel peace laureate Muhammad Yunus, ordered "support" for the families of protesters who were killed in the weeks of demonstrations culminating in Ms. Hasina's departure.

Earlier in the day a new chief justice was sworn in to office the day after his predecessor, another Hasina ally accused of sublimating the Supreme Court to her government's will, quit following protester demands.

New top justice Syed Refaat Ahmed replaced Obaidul Hassan after protesters gathered outside the court to demand the latter step-down.

Zelenskyy admits to Kyiv's new offensive against Russia

Reuters
KYIV

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy acknowledged for the first time on Saturday that Ukrainian forces were fighting in the surprise offensive in Russia's Kursk, as attacks on the border region continued with authorities rushing to evacuate people.

Moscow's forces were in their sixth day of intense battles against Kyiv's largest incursion into Russian territory since the start of the war, which left southwestern parts of Russia vulnerable before reinforcement started arriving.

In a sign of the gravity of the situation, Russia imposed a sweeping security regime in three border regions on Saturday, while Belarus, a staunch ally of Moscow, sent more troops to its border with Ukraine, accusing Kyiv of violating its air space.

Renewed vigour: A burned car in front of an apartment building that was damaged by shelling in Kursk in Russia on Sunday. AP

In his nightly video address, Mr. Zelenskyy said he had discussed the operation with top Ukrainian commander Oleksandr Syrskyi, vowing to restore justice after Russia launched the full-scale invasion on its smaller neighbour in February 2022.

Russia's Defence Ministry said on Sunday it had destroyed 14 Ukrainian drones and four Tochka-U tactical ballistic missiles overnight over the Kursk region, and 18 drones over other Russian regions that Ukraine frequently attacks.

Russian President Vladimir Putin cast the Ukrainian attack as a major provocation.

Trump campaign hit by hackers, blames 'foreign sources'

Agence France-Presse
WASHINGTON

Donald Trump's campaign said on Saturday it had been hacked, blaming "foreign sources" for distributing internal communications and a dossier on running mate J.D. Vance.

Mr. Trump's campaign implied Iran was behind the move as news outlet *Politico* reported it had received emails with the campaign material from a source who refused to identify themselves.

"These documents were obtained illegally from foreign sources hostile to the United States, intended to interfere with the 2024 election and sow chaos throughout our Democratic process," Trump campaign spokesman Steven Cheung said.

In 2016, a hack of Democratic National Committee emails – blamed on Russians – exposed internal party communications, including about candidate Hillary Clinton. Mr. Trump, who would go on to win the election, was criticised for encouraging the hack.

Woman Minister, Western-friendly diplomat among Iran President's proposed Cabinet

Agence France-Presse
TEHRAN

Abbas Araghchi, a 61-year-old career diplomat who led nuclear talks since 2013, is nominated as Foreign Minister

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian presented his Cabinet to parliament on Sunday, notably including a woman and a Western-friendly diplomat as the country's Foreign Minister.

Parliament speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf announced the names of the 19-member Cabinet presented by the President during an Assembly session broadcast live on state television.

For the post of Foreign Minister, Mr. Pezeshkian has named Abbas Araghchi, a 61-year-old career diplomat who has led nuclear negotiations since 2013.

Second woman Minister

Known for his openness to the West, he played a pivotal role in the 2015 nuclear deal between Iran and world powers that was torpedoed three years later by the United States' decision to withdraw from it.

Mr. Pezeshkian has also nominated one woman, Farzaneh Sadegh, who would become only the second Iranian woman to hold a ministerial post since the Islamic republic was established in 1979.

The 48-year-old is set to head the Ministry of Roads and Urban Development.

The reformist President has named as his future Interior Minister General Eskandar Momeni, a 60-year-old police commander and former member of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps.

General Aziz Nasirzadeh, a former commander of the Iranian Air Force and deputy chief of staff of the armed forces since 2021, is set to take the helm of the Defence Ministry.

Oil Minister

The President has chosen as his future Oil Minister Mohsen Paknezhad, a 58-year-old executive director with a long career in the country's energy industry.

Parliament is set to begin reviewing the proposed list of candidates on Monday and submit them to a vote by lawmakers starting Saturday.

Marcos slams China's 'reckless' actions in South China Sea

Agence France-Presse
MANILA

Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos on Sunday condemned what he called "illegal and reckless" actions by China's air force last week against a Filipino military plane patrolling over a disputed South China Sea reef.

Two Chinese air force aircraft undertook a "dangerous manoeuvre" and dropped flares in the path of a Philippine air force turboprop over Scarborough Shoal on Thursday, according to the Philippine military.

Manila said the Chinese actions put the lives of its crew in danger, but that the patrol plane returned safely to base.

The Chinese actions were "unjustified, illegal and reckless, especially as the PAF (Philippine Air Force) aircraft was undertaking a routine maritime security operation in Philippine airspace," Mr. Marcos said in a statement. Mr. Marcos "strongly condemns" the incident, the statement said.

Sport

Punjab FC's win against MCFC not enough for it to top group

Sports Bureau
KOLKATA

Punjab FC struck twice in injury-time to defeat Mumbai City FC 3-0 in its concluding Group C match of the 133rd Durand Cup at the Kishore Bharati Stadium on Sunday.

Norwegian forward Mushaga Bakenga scored twice while Croatian midfielder Filip Mrzljak netted once to complete PFC's dominance. The win saw PFC finish its group league engagements tied with Kerala Blasters on seven points but the latter took the top spot in the final standings with a superior goal difference.

Blasters qualified for the quarterfinals while Punjab FC remained the best second-placed team currently. The Shers will now have to wait for the results of other matches to confirm their place in the knockouts.

Easy-peasy: Bakenga slotted home a penalty. DEBASISH BHADURI

Chennaiyin FC beat Assam Rifles Football Team 2-1 in a Group D match at the JRD Tata Sports Complex stadium, Jamshedpur.

The results: Group C (Kolkata):

Punjab FC 3 (Mushaga Bakenga 62, 90+8-pen, Mrzljak

90+1) bt Mumbai City FC 0.

Group D (Jamshedpur):

Chennaiyin FC 2 (Romario Jesuraj 89-pen, Praful 90+7) bt Assam Rifles FT 1 (Jefferson Nongrud 76).

LIVE TELECAST

Football: Durand Cup: Sony Sports Ten 2 & LIV, 6.30 p.m.

Truth tipped to deliver in feature

RACING

HYDERABAD: The four-year-old grey gelding Truth, who is in excellent form as evidenced by his track performance and a mock race, should not find it difficult to win the Bhagyanagar Million, the feature event of Monday's (Aug. 12) races here.

1 ROYAL WINDSOR PLATE (1,800m), 3-y-o and upward, rated 20 to 45, 1.20 p.m.: 1. Quality Warrior (7) M. Mark 60, 2. Voice Of A Dream (5) Surya Prakash 59, 3. Caraxes (6) Shivansh 58.5, 4. White Pearl (2) Akshay K 58.5, 5. Das (3) G. Naresh 57, 6. Exclusive Spark (1) Mohit 55 and 7. London Bell (4) Md. Ekram 52.

1. WHITE PEARL, 2. CARAXES, 3. VOICE OF A DREAM

2 THREE WISHES PLATE (1,100m), 4-y-o and upward, rated upto 25 (Cat. III), 1.55: 1. Exeter (2) Ashad Asbar 60, 2. Magical Power (5) Kuldeep Jr. 3. Fortune Art (3) P. Sai K 56.5, 4. Blue Label (7) R.S. Jodha 56, 5. Reining Queen (1) Surya Prakash 55, 6. Stoli (6) Md. Ekram 55, 7. Nav Lakhaa (8) P. Ajeeth K 54 and 8. Zidane (4) G. Naresh 52.5.

1. NAV LAKHAA, 2. MAGICAL POWER, 3. BLUE LABEL

3 DEVARAKONDA CUP (1,100m), 3-y-o and upward, rated 20 to 45 (Cat. III), 2.30: 1. Bold Beauty (3) G. Naresh 60, 2. Calista Girl (5) Ajay K 60, 3. Crimson Rose (7) Shivansh 60, 4. Classy Dame (8) Md. Ekram 59.5, 5. Espionage (4) Kuldeep Sr. 57, 6. N R I Skypower (1) Likith Appu 55, 7. Deccan Ranger (2) Surya Prakash 53.5 and 8. Inderdhanush (6) Ashad Asbar 53.5.

1. ESPIONAGE, 2. INDERDHARNUSH, 3. CRIMSON ROSE

4 RAZIA SULTANA PLATE (1,100m), (Terms) Maiden, 3-y-o only (Cat. II), 3.05: 1. Aashritha Pet (2) G. Naresh 56, 2. Anemoi (9) Santosh Raj 56, 3. Annihilator (10) Kuldeep Sr. 56, 4. Flying Fury (3) Md. Ismail 56, 5. Golden Unicorn (11) P. Sai K 56, 6. Jim (7) Akshay K 56, 7. Priceless Prince (12) Suraj Narredu 56, 8. Soldier (4) Gaurav 56, 9. First Lady (1) Likith Appu 54.5, 10. Lady Jane (13) R.S. Jodha 54.5, 11. Lucky Fiero (14) Rafique Sk. 54.5, 12. Most Beautiful (5) Surya Prakash 54.5, 13. Opera Queen (8) Vikrant 54.5 and 14. Peppi (6) Ashad Asbar 54.5.

1. PRICELESS PRINCE, 2. JIM, 3. ANNIHILATOR

5 INDEPENDENCE CUP (DIV. I) (1,200m), 5-y-o and upward, rated 40 to 65 (Cat. II), 3.40: 1. Bangor On Dee (3) Afroz K 60, 2. True Icon (8) Gaurav 59.5, 3. The Inheritor (7) P. Sai K 59, 4. Devils Magic (9) Akshay K 57, 5. Dyanoosh (2) Mukesh 56, 6. Wind Sprite (6) Abhay Singh 55.5, 7. Red Snaper (4) Likith Appu 54, 8. Alpine Girl (11) Kuldeep Jr. 53.5, 9. Divine Connection (1) Md. Ekram 53.5, 10. Classical Music (10) Ajay K 51 and 11. Sopranos (5) P. Ajeeth K 51.

1. DEVILS MAGIC, 2. ALPINE GIRL, 3. WIND SPRITE

6 BHAGYANAGAR MILLION (1,800m), 3-y-o and upward, rated 80 and above (Cat. I), 4.15: 1. Siddharth (2) Akshay K 60, 2. Akido (3) Gaurav 58.5, 3. Truth (4) Kuldeep Sr. 55.5, 4. Livermore (5) Afroz K 53.5 and 5. High Command (1) Ashad Asbar 52.5.

1. TRUTH, 2. SIDDHARTH

7 INDEPENDENCE CUP (DIV. II) (1,200m), 5-y-o and upward, rated 40 to 65 (Cat. II), 4.50: 1. Blissful (10) R.S. Jodha 60, 2. Malibu (5) Md. Ekram 60, 3. Morior Invictus (9) M. Mark 57.5, 4. Amyra (11) Abhay Singh 56, 5. Midsummer Star (2) P. Sai K 56, 6. Happy Go Lucky (7) Akshay K 54, 7. Winning Attitude (1) Afroz K 54, 8. Coming Home (6) Mohit 53.5, 9. Kings Best (8) Md. Ismail 52, 10. Fortunatus (4) Ashad Asbar 51.5 and 11. Exclusive Luck (3) G. Naresh 51.

1. HAPPY GO LUCKY, 2. WINNING ATTITUDE, 3. MALIBU

Day's Best: **TRUTH**

Jackpot: 3, 4, 5, 6 & 7.

Mini Jackpot: (i) 1, 2, 3 & 4, (ii) 4, 5, 6 & 7.

Treble: (i) 2, 3 & 4, (ii) 5, 6 & 7.

Tanala: All races.

Divine Art obliges

HYDERABAD: Trainer Satish Narredu's filly Divine Art, piloted by Suraj Narredu, won the K. Mahipathi Rao Memorial Golconda Juvenile Million, the main event of Sunday's (Aug. 11) races here. The winner is owned by Mr. Ashok Ranpise, Mr. Daulat Chhabria, Mr. Teja Gollapudi & Mr. S. Raghu.

1. MICA EMPEROR PLATE (DIV. I): UCHCHAIHSHRAVAS (Neeraj Rawal) 1, Gloria (Ashad Asbar) 2, Tiger Ruby (Akshay K) 3 and Clarity (Suraj Narredu) 4. 6, 3-1/4 and 1-1/2. 1m, 14.20s. ₹18 (w), 11, 12 and 13 (p). SHP: 45, THP: 26, SHW: 13 and 27, FP: 99, Q: 56, Tanala: 221. Favourite: Uchchaihshravas. Owners: Md. Kashif Khan, Mr. D.N. Kempegowda & Mr. Vara Prasad Reddy. Trainer: N. Rawal.

2. MICA EMPEROR PLATE (DIV. II): NONPARIEL (Akshay Kumar) 1, Torchbearer (Ashad Asbar) 2, Shooting Star (Abhay Singh) 3 and Rani Ruckus (Md. Ismail) 4. 4-1/4, 2 and 4. 1m, 14.79s. ₹12 (w), 11, 10 and 27 (p). SHP: 19, THP: 78, SHW: 18 and 10, FP: 22, Q: 18, Tanala: 139. Favourite: Nonpariel. Owners: Mr. Rajendran rep. Rapar's Galloping Stars LLP, Mrs. T. Rohin & Mr. P. Ranga Raju. Trainer: D. Netto.

3. NAWAB KHAJA MOINUDDIN KHAN MEMORIAL CUP (DIV. II): INDIAN SNIPER (Mohit Singh) 1, Toffee (Md. Ekram) 2, Queen Empress (Abhay Singh) 3 and Magnum (P. Sai Kumar) 4. 1/2, 3/4 and Neck. 1m, 41.35s. ₹30 (w), 11, 28 and 45 (p). SHP: 74, THP: 125, SHW: 24 and 60, FP: 510, Q: 388, Tanala: 3,519. Favourite: Original Sin. Owners: Mr. Prabhakar Chowdary Tripuraneni & Mr. Tripuranenivenkata Aditya Chowdary. Trainer: Magan Singh.

4. K. MAHIPATHI RAO MEMORIAL GOLCONDA JUVENILE MILLION: DIVINE ART (Suraj Narredu) 1, Puranjaya (J. Chinoy) 2, Dapper Look (Kuldeep Sr.) 3 and Kalki (Antony Raj) 4. 2, 3-1/4 and 3-1/2. 1m, 28.19s. ₹15 (w), 11 and 18, SHP: 29, THP: 31, SHW: 10 and 15, FP: 55, Q: 38, Tanala: 262. Favourite: Divine Art. Owners: Mr. Ashok Ranpise, Mr. Daulat Chhabria, Mr. Teja Gollapudi & Mr. S. Raghu. Trainer: Satish Narredu.

5. NAWAB KHAJA MOINUDDIN KHAN MEMORIAL CUP (DIV. I): ENCORE (Md. Ekram Alam) 1, Brooklyn Beauty (G. Naresh) 2, Delhi Heights (Mukesh) 3 and Wallop And Gallop (P. Ajeeth K) 4. Head, 1-1/4 and 1. 1m, 41.23s. ₹26 (w), 16, 16 and 21 (p). SHP: 49, THP: 61, SHW: 16 and 28, FP: 245, Q: 127, Tanala: 1,100. Favourite: Encore. Owner: Mr. Al Murugappan. Trainer: K. Satheesh.

6. ADLER PLATE: CARNIVAL LADY (Shivansh) 1, Code Blue (Abhay Singh) 2, See My Attitude (Afroz Khan) 3 and Sadiya (Kuldeep Jr.) 4. 1-1/2, Shd and 2. 1m, 29.19s. ₹46 (w), 10, 20 and 23 (p). SHP: 34, THP: 55, SHW: 19 and 35, FP: 243, Q: 98, Tanala: 412. Favourite: Code Blue. Owners: Mr. L. Arun Kumar & Mr. Rameshbhai Amrutlal Mehta. Trainer: N. Ravinder Singh.

Jackpot : 70% ₹1,388 (219 tkts.), 30%: 104 (1,252 tkts.).

Mini Jackpot : 719 (93 tkts.).

Treble : (i) 149 (207 tkts.), (ii) 231 (237 tkts.).

LEGEND

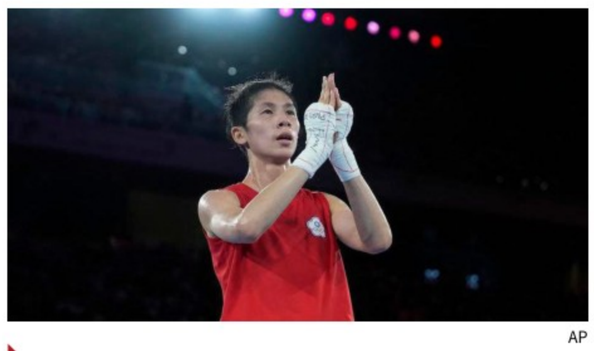
Brazil's Marta hints at retirement after finishing with a silver

AFP

Marta said on Saturday that defeat in the Olympic women's football final was likely her last appearance for Brazil. "In the Olympic Games (yes) and probably in official competition," Marta said after Brazil's 0-1 loss against USA. "I am not going to disappear from football. I am going to try to contribute somehow to this generation."

REDEMPTION

Taiwan's Lin claims 57kg Olympic boxing crown



AP

Taiwan's Lin Yu-ting won her Paris Olympics women's boxing final on Saturday. A day after Algeria's Imane Khelif clinched gold at 66kg, Lin claimed the 57kg crown with a unanimous points decision win over Poland's Julia Szeremeta at Roland Garros. It was Taiwan's second gold of the Games.

POWER-PACKED

Talakhadze clinches his third consecutive weightlifting gold

AFP

Lasha Talakhadze of Georgia won his third consecutive Olympic title in the heaviest weightlifting division, taking gold in the men's +102 kilograms on Saturday. Talakhadze won gold in the men's +102 kilograms after winning at +109 kilograms in Tokyo three years ago and +105 kilograms in 2016 at Rio de Janeiro.

RECOGNITION

Nadeem set to be honoured with Hilal-e-Imtiaz Award

REUTERS

Javelin thrower Arshad Nadeem is set to be honoured with the Hilal-e-Imtiaz Award by the Pakistan government. It is the second-highest civilian award given by the Government of Pakistan and Nadeem will get this award for his gold medal at the Paris Olympics.

A mixed bouquet of hits and near misses for India

It matched its second-best finish of six medals, achieved in London 2012, one less than that of Tokyo and the performance may make the decision makers at TOPS and MOC go in for a re-think

The highs: Manu, Sarabjot, Aman, Neeraj, Kusale and the Indian men's hockey team ensured glory for themselves and joy to all of India. ANI

Y.B. Sarangi
PARIS

Paris 2024 will be remembered for the six medals which brought joy to the Indians as well as the six fourth place finishes that resulted in heartbreaks.

A medal less than what was achieved in Tokyo may have restricted celebrations in the Indian camp, but the mixed bouquet of hits and near misses paints a promising picture of Indian sports.

Neeraj Chopra, Manu Bhaker, Sarabjot Singh, Swapnil Kusale, Aman Sehrawat and the Indian hockey team contributed to the six medals, including a silver and five bronze.

India finished 71st on the medals tally while Tokyo's one gold, two silver and four bronze had put in 48th.

Shooters Manu (25m sports pistol), Arjun Babuta (10m air rifle) and the mixed team pair of Anantjeet Singh Naruka and Maheshwari Chauhan (skeet), the archery mixed team pair of Ankita Bhakat and B. Dhiraj, shuttler Lakshya Sen and weightlifter Mirabai Chanu missed podium finishes by the smallest of margins.

The quarterfinal losses of boxers Nishant Dev and Lovlina Borgohain, just a step away from securing a medal, added to the country's so-near-yet-so-far moments.

The disqualification of wrestler Vinesh Phogat after reaching the women's 50kg final was another huge blow to the country's aspirations.

After wrestler Sushil Kumar and shuttler P.V. Sindhu, Neeraj became the third Indian to claim two consecutive individual medals. Always a big event athlete, the Tokyo gold medallist managed his workload well. Despite some injury issues Neeraj achieved his season best, 89.45m, which was close to his personal best 89.94m, to pick up a silver. The world champion needs to get fitter to cross the much-awaited 90m mark.

After their flop shows in 2016 and 2020, the Indian shooters bounced back. Following her Tokyo disappointment, pistol shooter Manu – who scripted history by becoming the first Indian woman shooter and the first from the country to take two bronze medals in a Games (in 10m air pistol individual and mixed team with Sarabjot) – scripted a superb turnaround.

Kusale added another bronze in the 50m rifle 3-position event.

Sehrawat, another product of Delhi's famous Chhatrasal Stadium that produced wrestlers of the class of Sushil, Yogeshwar Dutt and Ravi Dahiya, gave a fine display to land India's solitary medal from wrestling.

Two-time World championships medallist Vinesh, dropping down to 50kg, gave the country reasons to celebrate by stunning World and Olympic champion Yui Susaki of Japan on her way to the final. But the joy was short-lived as the ace wrestler was overweight by 100gm during the weigh-in on the second morning ahead of her title clash.

She has appealed to the Court of Arbitration for Sport against her disqualification and is claiming a silver for her efforts. Sports lovers will await CAS's decision, expected on Tuesday, to know whether the country manages to match its Tokyo medal tally.

The Indian hockey team showed consistency, despite the change in its coach about a year back, to retain its bronze medal. It delighted the crores of Indians, who are emotionally attached to the sport for its rich history in the country.

It was a fitting farewell to seasoned goal-keeper P.R. Sreejesh.

The country matched its second-best finish of six medals, achieved in London 2012, and the performance, for which the central government spent hundreds of crores through the Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS) and Mission Olympic Cell (MOC) to provide full support to the athletes, may make the decision makers go in for a re-think.

To put the heart-breaking moments into perspective, they tell us the capability of the Indian athletes on the biggest stage.

These also underscore the necessity to continue with the all-round support so that the near-misses can be transformed into medals as the country aspires to bid for the 2036 Olympics. As Paris closed its third Games, India would do well to take a leaf out of France's book to transform itself as a sporting nation.

Kipyegon makes 1,500m history; USA underlines its dominance

What a show! The incredible Kipyegon completed a hat-trick, while Kerr won the high jump gold after a jump-off. AP & GETTY IMAGES

Agence France-Presse
PARIS

History-making Faith Kipyegon became the first woman to win three consecutive Olympic 1,500m titles as the United States bagged three more golds on Saturday to confirm its track and field dominance.

The final Olympic session at a packed 69,000-capacity Stade de France offered up another startling night of dramatic action.

There was redemption for Jakob Ingebrigtsen in the 5,000m, while New Zealander Hamish Kerr won a jump-off for high jump gold.

Kipyegon made history in spectacular style, the 30-year-old 2016 and 2020 champion producing a tactical masterpiece to take gold in a new Olympic record of 3min 51.29sec.

It was another remarkable performance by Kipyegon, the reigning World champion and world record holder who can now arguably lay claim to being the greatest women's middle-distance runner in history.

"It has been a week with a lot of emotions," said Kipyegon in reference to winning the 5,000m silver earlier in the week.

"Tonight it is happiness and I am proud to win my third consecutive Olympic gold medal in the 1500m."

Kipyegon's teammate Emmanuel Wanyonyi made it two Kenyan golds on the night after he held off world champion Marco Arop of Canada for victory in the men's 800m.

In high jump, Kerr and American Shelby McEwen were locked on 2.36m at the end of regulation competition. But neither wanted to share and the pair went into a jump-off, the New Zealander coming out on top to rapturous applause from the crowd.

"High jump's always a roller coaster, there's always guys who will miss and then clear, and then miss," said Kerr.

Two-time defending World champion Ingebrigtsen made up for his fourth place in the 1500m with a dominant victory in the 5,000m.

The Norwegian timed 13min 13.66sec for gold, Kenya's Ronald Kwemoi taking silver in 13:15.04.

USA's Masai Russell clocked 12.33sec for victory in the 100m hurdles before 400m hurdles winners Rai Benjamin and Sydney McLaughlin-Levrone and 200m champion Gabby Thomas helped steer the men and women's 4x400m relay teams to victory.

The women, who won in 3:15.27, narrowly missed out on breaking one of the oldest world records in athletics – the 3:15.17 set by the former Soviet Union in 1988.

USA topped the athletics medals table with 14 golds, 11 silvers and nine bronzes. Kenya wa second with four golds, two silvers and four bronzes.

GOLDIES

Faith Kipygegon (Ken): *Women's 1500m*
Hamish Kerr (NZ): *Men's High Jump*
USA (Christopher Bailey, Vernon Norwood, Bryce Deadmon, Rai Benjamin): *Men's 4x400m Relay*
USA (Shamier Little, Sydney McLaughlin-Levrone, Gabby Thomas, Alexis Holmes): *Women's 4x400m Relay*
Wang Liuyi & Wang Qianyi (Chn): *Artistic Swimming Duet Free Routine*
USA: *Men's Basketball*
David Ahman & Jonatan Hellvig (Swe): *Men's Beach Volleyball*
Lin Yu-ting (Tpe): *Boxing Women's 57kg*
Lydia Ko (NZ): *Golf Women's Individual Stroke Play*
Sakura Motoki (Jpn): *Wrestling Women's Freestyle 62kg*
Abdumalik Khalokov (Uzb): *Boxing Men's 57kg*
Li Qian (Chn): *Boxing Women's 75kg*
Bakhodir Jalolov (Uzb): *Boxing Men's +92kg*
Phil Wizard (Can): *Breaking B-Boys*
China: *Rhythmic Gymnastics Group All-Around*
China (Chen Meng, Wang Manyu, Sun Yingsha): *Table Tennis Women*
Arian Salimi (Iri): *Taekwondo Men's +80kg*
Althea Laurin (Fra): *Taekwondo Women's +67kg*
Lasha Talakhadze (Geo): *Weightlifting Men's +102kg*
Solfrid Koanda (Nor): *Weightlifting Women's 81kg*
Sifan Hassan (Ned): *Athletics Women's Marathon*
Li Wenwen (Chn): *Weightlifting Women's +81kg*
Kiyooka Kitaro (Jpn): *Wrestling Men's Freestyle 65kg*
Akhmed Tazhudinov (Brn): *Wrestling Men's Freestyle 97kg*
Kagami Yuka (Jpn): *Wrestling Women's Freestyle 76kg*
Michelle Gulyas (Hun): *Modern Pentathlon Women's Individual*
Italy: *Volleyball Women*
Denmark: *Handball Men*
Harrie Lavreysen (Ned): *Cycling Track Men's Keirin*
Jennifer Valente (USA): *Cycling Track Women's Omnium*
Ellesse Andrews (NZ): *Cycling Track Women's Sprint*
Serbia: *Water Polo Men*
USA: *Basketball Women*

Lavreysen... pedalling to three golds. GETTY IMAGES

Final medals table

	Country	G	S	B	T
1	USA	40	44	42	126
2	China	40	27	24	91
3	Japan	20	12	13	45
4	Australia	18	19	16	53
5	France	16	26	22	64
6	Netherlands	15	7	12	34
7	Great Britain	14	22	29	65
8	Korea	13	9	10	32
9	Italy	12	13	15	40
10	Germany	12	13	8	33
71	**India**	**0**	**1**	**5**	**6**

India's pride

The chosen ones: Manu and Sreejesh snapped before leading Team India at the Closing Ceremony. X@TEAMINDIA

POSTCARD FROM PARIS

A gesture

In a gesture to the contribution of journalists covering the sport, former India captain and Hockey India president Dilip Tirkey invited some of them over for lunch to celebrate the national hockey team's second consecutive bronze medal win in the Olympics.

Tirkey, always warm towards the scribes through his long career and even beyond it, underlined the importance of sports writers in the growth of the sport as he requested everyone present to give their autographs on a piece of cloth, which he planned to frame in the HI office. A call from hockey great Dhanraj Pillay to acknowledge the role of journalists in popularising the sport made the occasion all the more special.

The big sale

With the Olympics drawing to a close, the organisers decided to offer huge discounts and as a result one could see long queues in front of the merchandising outlets with fans grabbing the opportunity to purchase the Paris 2024 products for their near and dear ones. — **Y.B. Sarangi**

United States reaffirms it is the gold standard in Olympic basketball

The Americans beat back a strong challenge from hosts France in tense and fiercely contested men's and women's finals

Unstoppable: United States' raft of stars helped it land a record fifth consecutive gold while the women weathered a keen fight for an unprecedented eighth successive crown. REUTERS

Agence France-Presse
PARIS

The United States made a clean sweep of the basketball titles at the Paris Games with the hosts France coming second best in both finals despite putting up a spirited fight.

The women narrowly beat the hosts to win an unprecedented eight successive gold on Sunday and extend their run of victories at the Games to 61.

A'ja Wilson scored a game-high 21 points for the Americans who won the title for the 10th time, securing the country its 40th gold of the Games to top the medals table.

Earlier on Saturday the men won their fifth straight crown, holding off France 98-87.

In a rematch of the Tokyo Olympics final three years ago, LeBron James and the US team stacked with NBA stars once again proved too much for France's sensational NBA Rookie of the Year Victor Wembanyama and his teammates.

France sliced a 14-point deficit to three with 3min 04sec to play, but Golden State Warriors star Stephen Curry drilled a three-pointer and Phoenix Suns star Kevin Durant nailed two free throws as the United States relentlessly powered to the finish.

Curry finished with eight three-pointers and led the US scoring with 24 points. Durant and Devin Booker added 15 apiece and James scored 14 with six rebounds, 10 assists a steal and a block. For Durant it was a record fourth Olympic gold. James earned his third and Curry, a four-time NBA champion, claimed his first in his first Olympic appearance.

Wembanyama had his best offensive game of the Olympics, scoring 26 points. Guerschon Yabusele added 20, but Isaia Cordinier – whose offensive contributions were key to France's bounce-back after a narrow victory over Japan and a humbling loss to Germany in group play – was held scoreless.

France connected on just nine of 30 three-point attempts and the United States held a 31-9 advantage in fast-break points.

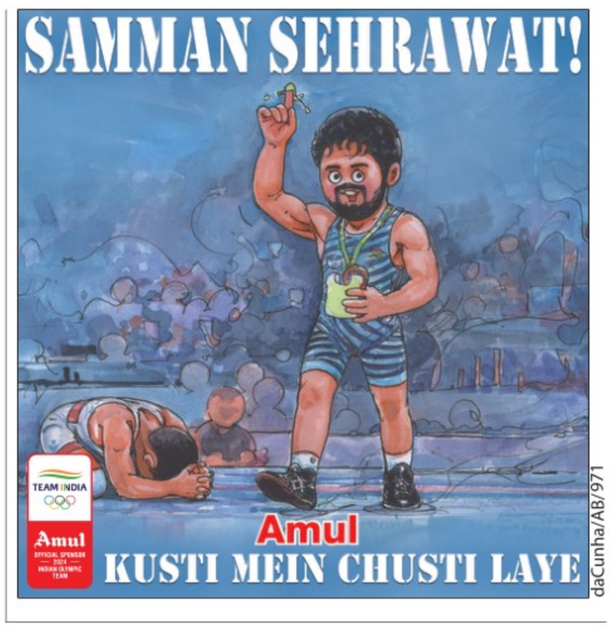
The dream final drew a raft of luminaries.

French President Emmanuel Macron was in the house and so were a bevy of former NBA stars including Scottie Pippen, Pau Gasol, Carmelo Anthony and France's Tony Parker.

Sprint star Sha'Carri Richardson was courtside, a day after she anchored the US 4x100m relay to gold.

Earlier on Saturday, Serbia won bronze with a dominant 93-83 victory over World Cup champion Germany.

Three-time NBA Most Valuable Player Nikola Jokic posted a triple double of 19 points, 12 rebounds and 11 assists to lead Serbia, which bounced back less than 40 hours after a heartbreaking 95-91 loss to the U.S. in the semifinals.



Maharaj, Rabada put SA on ascendancy

Making inroads: Rabada stepped to the occasion with crucial strikes celebrates after sending Hodge back to the pavilion. AFP

SA IN WI

Agence France-Presse
PORT OF SPAIN

Keshav Maharaj and Kagiso Rabada combined on Saturday to earn South Africa a healthy first innings lead over the West Indies with the visitors attempting to defy the impact of inclement weather in seeking to force an unlikely victory going into the final day of the first Test of a two-match series.

Steady rain restricted play to just the final session on the fourth day.

The scores:

South Africa 357 & 30/0 in 5 overs vs West Indies 233 in 91.5 overs (Keacy Carty 42, Jason Holder 36, Jomel Warrican 35 n.o., Maharaj 4/76, Rabada 3/56).

McGrath leads Australia-A's T20 series sweep

Press Trust of India
BRISBANE

Tahila McGrath was the lead cast with an unbeaten fifty as Australia Women-A team defeated India by seven wickets in the third and final T20 to complete a series sweep on Sunday.

Australia had won the first two matches by five runs and eight wickets respectively.

The scores:
India-A 120/8 in 20 overs (Kiran Navgire 38) lost to Australia-A 121/3 in 13.5 overs (Tahila McGrath 51 n.o., Tahila Wilson 39).

Instrumental: McGrath's unbeaten fifty steered the hosts over the line in commanding fashion. GETTY IMAGES

KARNATAKA ROUND UP

The best: Karnataka, which clinched the overall title at the sub-junior and junior National Aquatic in Bhubaneswar.

Dhinidhi wins two more gold medals

Dhinidhi Desinghu added two more gold medals, emerging triumphant in the Group II girls' 200m medley and 100m freestyle races as the sub-junior and junior National Aquatic Championship being held in Bhubaneswar wound to a close on Sunday.

Dhinidhi, who recently participated in the Paris Olympics, was declared the best swimmer in her category after finishing with five golds overall.

Karnataka swept the team championships, winning five of the six titles across Groups I, II and III. It was also crowned the overall champion.

Select results (winners all):
Boys: 100m freestyle: Group II: Akshaj Thakuria, 55.40s.
Girls: 200m IM: Group I: Manavi Varma, 2:25.83; **Group II:** Dhinidhi Desinghu, 2:26.97; **100m freestyle: Group I:** S. Rujula, 58.76; **Group II:** Dhinidhi, 57.75.

Shaurya Binu wins title

Shaurya Binu of Bengaluru clinched the title with a four-day aggregate of 23-under-257 in the TATA PGTI Mysuru Open golf tournament in Mysuruon Sunday.

Important results: 1. Shaurya Binu (257), 2. Aman Raj (258), 3. Veer Ganapathy (Amateur, 259), 4. Saptak Talwar & Angad Cheema (260).

Vishwaas Gowda stars for School Vivekananda

BENGALURU: L. Vishwaas Gowda top-scored with 146 as School Vivekananda thrashed Sri Vani Educational Centre Trust by 290 runs in the K.M. Ramprasad Shield U-16 second division schools tournament. In another match, Skanda Raghavan's six-wicket haul (6/14) was instrumental in National Public School, B-10's six-wicket victory over Sri Kumaran Children's Home.

The scores: School Vivekananda 374/6 in 45 overs (L. Vishwaas Gowda 146, M. Tarun 30, S. Yuvaraj 67, Parv Rajesh Makkad 4/50) bt Sri Vani Educational Centre Trust 84 in 31.2 overs (H. Dhruv Acharya 4/14).

St. Paul's English School 55 in 17.5 overs (V. Sumukha 3/2) lost to Vidyaniketan PS, Ullal 56/3 in 14.2 overs.

MES Kishore Kendra 40 in 19.3 overs (Aman Shakti 3/16, Aarav Dilipkumar Lathiya 3/12) lost to Jain International RS 41 for no loss in 2.5 overs.

Sri Kumaran Children's Home, State 78 in 27.5 overs (Dhrupad Gurumanjesh 31, Skanda Raghavan 6/14) lost to NPS, B-10 79/4 in 13.4 overs.

Carmel HS, B–79 51 in 28.1 overs (Aaryan Nagesh 3/8) lost to Presidency School, RT Nagar 52 for two in 6.1 overs.

The Sports School 227 in 49.3 overs (M. Tanshh Krishna 75, P. Jnana Prabhu 41, Vishal Sanjay Kumar 28, Vihaan Samit Ranka 5/52) bt Frank Anthony Public School : 57 in 18.4 overs (Shreyas Indian 5/5).

Kensri School 144 in 42.5 overs (Dhruvesh 35) lost to Triveni Memorial Educational Trust 145/8 in 42 overs (N. Bhuvan Tejas 48, Preetham Pushpakumar 27 n.o., P. Navadeep 4/35).

The Cathedral HS 180 in 44.3 overs (Akshay Babu 53, Mohammed Saqib 25, Jaiveer Saigal 3/24) lost to Mallya Aditi IS 181/2 in 30.5 overs (Yashas Giri Shankar 98).

Deva Matha Central School 154 in 43 overs (Tambrahalli Samanyu 31, Harsh Ketan Udani 42, S.K. Aayush Paul Anto 34, R. Yashas 3/40) lost to Presidency School, Nandini Layout 156/2 in 31.2 overs (R. Yashas 39 n.o., G. Ananthjit Hariharan 62 n.o.).

Preetam wins

Preetam K. Patil, with 6.5 points, won the Independence Day U-16 Champions Chess Academy challenge held here on Sunday. Anvith Bhat (6 pts) was second while A. Guhan (6) finished third.

We will get good results if the mentality is right, says Marquez

FOOTBALL

Uthra Ganesan
NEW DELHI

New role: Head coach Marquez hopes to take Indian football to new heights during his stint. AIFF

The newly appointed national football coach Manolo Marquez has admitted there are challenges ahead for the team but is hopeful of improving both the standards and the standings in his three-year tenure that starts next week.

In his first official interaction with the media here on Sunday Spaniard Marquez, named as replacement for Igor Stimac last month, was honest in his assessment of Indian players being reluctant to move out of their comfort zones and being mentally not strong enough.

"The level of Indian players is better than what it was five years ago. But it can be better and improve faster. My feeling is that Indian players are very comfortable. Life is very good for them in the ISL and it is difficult for them to try and go abroad. You will grow when you play abroad. I am not speaking about the top level, Premier League or LaLiga. But if you go abroad and play against opponents who are better than you, you will improve," he said candidly.

Only a handful of Indians have ever signed up with a foreign club – Gurpreet Singh Sandhu, Sandesh Jhingan and Sunil Chhetri among them. Not surprisingly, they have been the best performers with the national side in the last few years. Marquez also declared that the Indian players needed to toughen up mentally.

"We need to improve in this aspect, they have to be stronger mentally. Technique, tactics, fitness are important but if the head doesn't work, you can do nothing. If you are losing 2-0 in the 20th minute, you have 70 minutes to turn the game. And this is possible. If the mentality is correct, we will get good results," Marquez shrugged.

He also stressed on the importance of being professional more than once, refusing to be bothered with doubts of conflict of interest in his role as the chief coach of Indian Super League club FC Goa. "It is not the first time, it won't be the last. It is not common but there are big names, Guus Hiddink, Renus Michels and others, who have managed a club and national team. It is finally about professionalism. We will work very hard for the national team," he said.

While he was glad to get a chance to coach a national team, Marquez also agreed that getting Indian coaches was the key to long-term success. "One target for the national team going forward should be to have an Indian coach. I can speak very good about India but an Indian coach will know better how the country works and people in every part of India," he insisted.

INBRIEF

Women paddlers give China its 300th Olympic gold

China's Chen Meng, Sun Yingsha and Wang Manyu won the gold medal in the Olympic women's table tennis team final on Saturday, with Japan taking silver and South Korea the bronze. It was the country's 300th gold medal in Olympic history and fifth consecutive triumph in the women's team event, a feat that the men had also achieved on Friday. China has won 37 of the 42 gold medals in table tennis since the sport was added at Seoul in 1988.

Thomas Bach will not seek third term as IOC president

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) president Thomas Bach said on Saturday that he will not seek to remain in charge for a third term. "New times are calling for new leaders," the 70-year-old , who has been in charge since 2013, told IOC members. Bach insisted he would not attempt to extend his mandate by changing the Olympic charter that limits the president to a maximum of 12 years in the role. His successor will be elected during the IOC's 143rd session in Athens from March 18-21, 2025 and will take office in June.

Dominant Li wins China's fifth weightlifting gold

Li Wenwen eased to victory in the women's heavyweight class to give China a fifth gold in the Olympic weightlifting competition in Paris – hoisting her coach in the air to celebrate. In the above-81kg category, the 150kg Li, who also won the heavyweight gold at the Tokyo Games, dominated. At the end, with victory assured, instead of picking up the bar, she lifted her coach.

Jeevan and Vijay Sundar go down in the final

Top seeds Theo Arribage of France and Orlando Luz of Brazil beat fourth seeds Jeevan Nedunchezhiyan and Vjjay Sundar Prashanth 6-2, 6-4 in the doubles final of the €74,825 Challenger tennis tournament in Bonn, Germany. The champions collected 75 ATP points and €4,250. The Indian pair won 50 points and €2,450. S.D. Prajwal and Adil Kalyanpur won the doubles title in the $25,000 ITF men's event in Brazzaville, Congo beating Dhruva Mulye and Goncalo Oliveira 7-6(3), 7-5.

Jockey Akshay Kumar honoured for 1000 career wins

Jockey Akshay Kumar was honoured in Hyderabad on Sunday by R. Surender Reddy, chairman of the Hyderabad Race Club, in recognition of his achieving 1,000 career victories. The milestone came when Akshay guided Positano to victory in Bengaluru on August 9. Akshay, who started his career at the HRC in 2013, made an immediate impact by clinching the Leading Apprentice Jockey Award (with 10 wins) in his debut year. Over the years, Akshay has become one of the most consistent and successful jockeys in Indian racing.